Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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G-15 Countries Hold 3-Day Summit in New Delhi

Preparatory Meeting Reported

BK2603133894 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Text] The G-15 countries have favored transregional arrangements to promote cooperation in trade, investment, and technology. The matter came up for extensive discussion at the meeting of personnel representatives of the heads of government and state of the group in New Delhi today. Briefing newsmen later, the spokesman of the G-15 summit said the representatives will come up with concrete proposals to promote this in both the private and public sectors. They felt that this will increase exchanges among them. With the group having a combined trade turnover of over $400 billion a year and a GDP of $1.4 trillion, the arrangement will improve their economic strength individually and collectively.

The preparatory meeting for the New Delhi G-15 summit—beginning on Monday [28 March]—considered substantive issues, including the summit agenda, draft joint communique, future organization of the work and activities of the group, and proposals for new projects. The major agreement among them was to take up issue-based consultations with the G-7 group of industrialized countries a practical and result-oriented approach. [sentence as heard] They stressed the importance of continuing post-Uruguay Round consultations. Another suggestion was that the foreign ministers of the group should have a more comprehensive role to carry on the work effectively between the summit meetings. Procedural aspects—including the quorum issue, frequency of summit meetings, and predetermined period for holding the summit—also came up for review. The representatives will continue their consultations tomorrow morning.

The troika foreign ministers of G-15—India, Argentina, and Senegal—will also have simultaneous meetings on the summit agenda.

AIR [All India Radio] correspondent reports that New Delhi is spruced up to welcome the heads of government and state of the G-15 countries, who will be given a ceremonial welcome in the capital on Sunday. Seven or eight heads of state and government are expected to attend the summit.

Leaders Arrive for Summit

BK2803002994 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Economic and trade cooperation among the developing countries will be focus of the G-15 summit opening in New Delhi tomorrow. The stage is set for the fourth summit-level conference with the heads of state or government of five countries arriving in the capital this afternoon. Those who arrived are the president of Zimbabwe, Mr. Robert Mugabe; the president of Indonesia, General Suharto; the president of Nigeria, General Sani Abacha; the president of Senegal, Abdou Diouf; and the prime minister of Malaysia, Dr. Mahathir Mohamed. They were accorded a ceremonial welcome in the fore court of Rashtrapati Bhavan [President House]. The president of Argentina, Mr. Carlos Saul Menem, is arriving on Wednesday [March 30].

The prime minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao, will formally open the three-day summit as India is the current chairman of G-15. The heads of state and government will discuss during the meeting restructuring of the United Nations and the future course of action of G-15 nations. Global issues of special interest to developing countries will be discussed at length. These include human rights and terrorism, eradication of poverty, world trade, resources for development, and the environment. After the inaugural ceremony tomorrow, the plenary will begin. It will be followed by informal meetings. On Tuesday, the heads of state and government will go for a retreat at Rashtrapati Bhavan to continue informal consultations. A joint communique is expected to be issued on Wednesday reflecting the consensus of G-15 on South-South and North-South cooperation.

India has offered training facilities to G-15 countries in the conservation of biodiversity and the development of gene banks for medicinal and aromatic plants. It has already set up three national gene banks and published an inventory of plants and rare species of proven medical value. The project has been taken up following a decision of the Kuala Lumpur summit of G-15 nations. New Delhi is also coordinating implementation of three other projects. A status report on the project says that a data bank on solar energy applications will be ready by the middle of the year.

India's Rao Addresses Opening Session

BK2803094594 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 0500 GMT 28 Mar 94

[Address by Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao at the opening session of the G-15 summit at the Vigyan Bhavan conference hall in New Delhi—live]

[Text] I declare open the inaugural meeting of the fourth summit of the summit-level group of South-South consultation and cooperation, the Group of 15 [G-15].

Excellencies, presidents, prime minister, our honored guests, special envoys, ladies, and gentlemen: I have pleasure in welcoming our distinguished guests, the heads of states and government, and their delegations to New Delhi on the occasion of the fourth summit of the Group of 15 for South-South consultation and cooperation. Though your visit this time may be short, I hope you will be comfortable and have an opportunity to see something of this historic city.

This summit represents an opportunity to see how best the creative energy of our group can be released to serve our common objectives of peace and development through cooperation and engagement in a rapidly

changing world. Excellencies, we are a young group, but our concerns are age-old. We are compact, but our vision extends across continents. To realize our unique potential as a group, we must emphasize our transregional personality. Our activities must draw sustenance from and in equal measure contribute to our cohesion as a group. They should be comprehensive and imaginative enough to lead to the willing and positive participation of countries from different continents, such as we are geographically distant yet compact, in close cooperation and close in purpose.

These are not easy tasks when urgent and varied domestic and regional developments demand our attention. However, equally compelling is the longer-term imperative of steering our countries toward a balanced and synergy of national, regional, and global interests. I am convinced that this is extremely important.

At this G-15 summit we hope to demonstrate that our absorption in the tasks of today will not come in the way of our seriously addressing the emerging and transcendent issues of tomorrow. Excellencies, the pace of change in the last few years has been rapid. The end of the Cold War, the intensified globalization of national economies and the technological revolution are just a few elements of this change. Yet the transcendent issues to which I refer are still with us. We saw the promise of peace, but it has been far from realized. Forces of conflict manifest themselves primarily as attempts to undermine the nation-state system on which the international order rests. They have assumed dangerous proportions and diverse forms—terrorism, separatism, and fundamentalism. I believe we in the G-15 have the capacity and the conviction to mobilize world opinion against such destructive forces as we represent the quest for peace, security, and stability. We are fully convinced of the need to introduce reforms in the UN system and expansion of the Security Council so as to give representation to the developing world in the council's permanent membership. These issues are engaging our attention constantly in the relevant forums.

The importance of strengthening economic and development cooperation in our interdependent world is recognized around the globe. Such cooperation alone can deal with the problems of systemic inequalities, macroeconomic imbalances, ecological sustainability, stagnation, and widespread poverty. Protectionist barriers against developing country exports and discriminatory and restrictive regimes governing the flow of technology must be lowered. There should be adequate appreciation of our capacity and potential to not only develop rapidly, but in the process to act as effective catalyst for the regeneration of the world economy. We shall exemplify the intrinsic symbiosis between the interests of the industrialized countries and those of ours.

Our determination to build up intrinsic capacities to expand cooperation among ourselves is firm. Extraneous efforts of developing countries, not least those of the members of this group, to transform and liberalize our economies and to integrate them with the global economy is aimed at charting a new trajectory of growth. This factor, as well as the substantial progress achieved by some of us, have created the basis for meaningful and functional networks of relationships—commercial and technological—between and among ourselves and with the rest of the world. Cooperation between developing countries on a regional and transregional basis has assumed an urgent dimension for us to extend the frontiers of growth. As we grow in collective strength, so too will our individual and joint capacities for development, to enable us to contribute to the establishment of a more equitable, balanced, and prosperous world order. Our attempts to intensify our interaction with regional free trade and economic cooperation arrangements could affirm the value of open regionalism and of becoming viable growth centers for the free flow of trade, investment, and technology across national and regional borders.

Cooperation in the G-15 is tethered to the concrete programs and projects. Over these four years, the projects we have undertaken are in various stages of implementation. We have already made some progress in establishing databases and information networks on complementarities and opportunities for mutually beneficial trade, investment, and technology. Some of our projects operate within the matrices of critical need, natural advantage, and environmental sustainability. Some other projects seek to establish and strengthen the much-needed infrastructural links among our countries, and yet others are intended to stimulate intra-industry trade and cooperation in key sectors, such as petrochemicals. The G-15 Business Forum, which meets regularly along with the summits, is another concrete expression of cooperation where political purpose is translated into practical business opportunities. We are conscience of the constraints—infrastructural and attitudinal—that have so far circumscribed the full potential of intra-G-15 trade and economic cooperation. This must change. We also admit that our cooperative projects need to be better targeted and more effectively implemented if they are to make an impact. The program itself being a pioneering task, such initial shortcomings are to be expected. Yet a good beginning has been made and it is my earnest wish that this summit come up with new ideas on achieving improvements.

Excellencies, I have continued the practice initiated by His Excellency President Diouf of Senegal and communicated our views to the chairman of the G-7 in July 1993. I am heartened by the response. I am convinced the time is right for carrying such constructive consultations further.

Excellencies, the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations have concluded. We hope that it will, as promised, bring about further liberalization and expansion of the world trade to the benefit of all countries, especially the less developed trading partners. We also expect that the norms and institutions that we have

established in the context of the World Trade Organization will in their actual operation uphold the rule of law in the realm of international trade and that the rights and interests of weaker trading partners will be protected. They must also take care to ensure that the barriers to trade that the Uruguay Round is to lower are not replaced by new barriers against developing-country exports in the guise of noneconomic concerns. We already have reason to be concerned about attempts to undermine multilateralism and agreed frameworks for the liberalization of trade. These manifest themselves in their resort to unilateral actions, demands for concessions beyond those agreed to in the round, and attempts to introduce new protectionist agendas.

All of our countries recognize the importance of increased investments in our productive and technological capacities for accelerated growth and development. At the same time, official development assistance retains its importance. Concessional funding from multilateral financial institutions—particularly in the context of low-income countries, which are striving to build basic social infrastructure and alleviate poverty—is an imperative. The burden of external debt is a key resource constraint for indebted developing countries. The forging of innovative growth-oriented solutions as well as non-discriminatory trade and financial policies are needed to contribute to increasing the earnings of developing countries.

Our commitment to environmental sustainability is total and through appropriate policies and measures, we will strive to implement our commitments under Agenda 21. On this matter of global concern [passage indistinct] may even human survival, we in turn expect our partners in industrialized countries to give effect to their commitment to make available new and additional resources as well as environmentally sound technologies on favorable and preferential terms.

Excellencies, we are like the pilgrims that our poet-philosopher Rabindernath Tagore described in the following terms: Yet they are coming the pilgrims one and all; coming to their true inheritance of the world; they are ever broadening their consciousness, ever seeking the higher and higher unity, even approaching nearer to the one central truth which is all comprehensive.

The fact that we have gathered here from three continents of the earth marks a realization of our true inheritance of this earth. Our actions in the coming years must confirm that our group is larger than the some of its parts and it is worthy of this inheritance. Thank you. [applause]

Indonesia's Suharto Delivers Address

BK2803085094 Jakarta Radio Republik Indonesia Network in Indonesian 0600 GMT 28 Mar 94

[Text] The opening ceremony of the Group of 15 (G-15) summit was held today in New Delhi, India. President Suharto addressed the ceremony on behalf of Asian member countries in the group.

On this occasion, President Suharto said the time has come for countries from the North or South to make a new collaborative effort for development and take the initiative to promote a democratic spirit for a productive partnership to seek a global solution to the existing problem. He said to date, efforts to launch the North-South dialogue has shown some positive results, presented our determination, and indicated our common views on the best way to create a new world order.

On the G-15, President Suharto said that within three years, the G-15 had embarked on forming 18 cooperation projects covering information systems, finance, agriculture, population, science and technology, energy, as well as the environment.

President Suhato expressed his gladness over the increase in positive responses from the business sector in taking advantage of the opportunities available.

The fourth G-15 summit was attended by eight countries. It is expected to end on 30 March.

Malaysia's Badawi on Role of G-15

BK2803091394 Kuala Lumpur Voice of Malaysia in English 0800 GMT 28 Mar 94

[Text] Leaders of the Group of 15, G-15, are expected to come out with new initiatives to enhance South-South cooperation at their three-day resumed extraordinary summit beginning in New Delhi today. It is one of the major items on the agenda in line with the objective of the grouping, that is to strengthen South-South cooperation. Prime Minister Datuk Sri Dr. Mahathir Mohamed is among the several leaders who are present in the Indian capital for the summit.

Our correspondent Vasunta Rajkumaran has these details:

[Begin recording] [Rajkumaran] Good morning! Though the summit does not draw the full participation of all the 15 heads of state or government, it will be no less significant with a perusal of the agenda reveals the commitment being attached by member countries to ensure the continued development of the G-15. One of the major topics to be discussed is the future course of the group in a fast changing world. This summit is being regarded as a watershed in the development of the group. It will provide the leaders an opportunity to look at the G-15 with fresh perspective. In fact, the group has the potential of becoming consultative partners with the G-7 on issues and policies affecting the international environment for accelerated growth and sustainable development.

Malaysia views the G-15 as the beginning of a collaborative effort towards a North-South dialogue. The minister of foreign affairs, Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi,

says as there is a stronger call for a North-South dialogue, there is certainly a role for the G-15 in the future.

[Badawi] We have begun to see lately that there is now also a stronger and stronger call for North-South dialogue. The North-South dialogue is something that we must have. But then we must begin with a successful South-South cooperation. I cannot see how a North-South dialogue can be successful as far as advancing the interest of the countries of the South as much as protecting the interests of the South if there is no effective South-South cooperation. And G-15 certainly emphasized on that. I would see G-15 as the beginning of a collaborative effort towards that. South-South cooperation has been much an idea. Since it is an idea, we talk about South-South cooperation. So G-15 tries to implement, tries to come out with projects that make South-South cooperation a reality.

[Rajkumaran] The other major issues on the agenda are the questions of frequency of summit and the level and composition of the summit quorum. The foreign ministers at their meeting reached a consensus that the summit should be held every two years so as to ensure a better participation among the leaders. They have also proposed that heads who are genuinely unable to attend summits be allowed to send special envoys. [end recording]

Arab-Israeli Talks

Delegates Reportedly Reach 'Formula' for Agreement

NC2503155094 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1500 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 25 Mar (MENA)—An official Palestinian source has stated that the Palestinian and Israeli delegations reached a formula for an agreement at dawn today, during meetings held in Cairo. The formula explains the task of the Palestinians police force and the international observers in the city of Hebron.

In a statement to MENA today, the Palestinian source pointed out that differences persist on certain sensitive points related to the security authority in Hebron and the role of international observers in establishing and maintaining security in the city.

The source added that these disputed points, the number of Palestinian policemen and international observers, have been referred to the Palestinian and Israeli leadership for consideration and consultation.

The Palestinian source noted that if an agreement is reached on these disputed issues, negotiations will resume in Cairo on Tuesday.

The Palestinian side is requesting that the Palestinian police force and international observers include 1,000 men each. The Israeli side is absolutely opposed to this number.

PLO Demands Reinstatement of Municipal Councils

TA2503181194 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Text] The PLO has demanded from the Israeli delegation that is conducting negotiations in Cairo the reinstatement of the municipal and village councils that either resigned or were dismissed, foremost of all the Hebron municipal council. Former Hebron mayor Mustafa 'Abd-al-Nabi al-Natshah told our correspondent Fayiz 'Umar that he welcomes this decision and that he is ready to return to his post. Bayt Jala Mayor Bisharah Da'ud welcomed this demand and said that its implementation will enhance the peace process and the efforts being exerted for its resumption.

Sha'th on Security Accord, Resumption of Talks

NC2603210894 Paris AFP in English 2047 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, March 26 (AFP)—The PLO and Israel agreed Saturday [26 March] that an accord on security for the massacre town of Hebron could be signed on Tuesday, clearing the way for a resumption of talks on Palestinian self-rule.

The accord could be signed when the two sides reconvene on Tuesday morning in Cairo if the final details are ironed out in time, said the PLO's chief negotiator Nabil Sha'th.

"As soon as this accord is signed, the negotiations on launching autonomy in Gaza and Jericho will resume immediately," after a month-long suspension because of the Hebron massacre, he told AFP.

Sha'th said the agreement would cover the deployment of Palestinian police and Norwegian observers in the West Bank town where a Jewish settler killed 30 Moslem worshippers on February 25.

The Israeli government will "commit itself to adopt measures to prevent friction" between the 450 settlers and 120,000 Palestinians of Hebron, he added.

Sha'th confirmed earlier reports from Israel that the key outstanding issue was the number of police and observers to be posted in the town.

The police will be posted at fixed points around Hebron to guard schools, hospitals and the university, he said. Joint Israeli-Palestinian units would patrol the town.

He implicitly acknowledged that the Israeli army would have the final word on security, saying "the situation in Hebron will be different from Gaza and Jericho," where autonomy is to be launched.

As for the autonomy negotiations, a final accord on the launch will be signed by April 13, the original date on which the Israeli army was to have pulled out of Gaza and Jericho, said Sha'th.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin said earlier that he hoped the autonomy talks would resume on Tuesday along with a final session on the security arrangements for Hebron.

PLO, Israel Said 'Optimistic' on Security Accord

NC2703125994 Paris AFP in English 1202 GMT 27 Mar 94

[By Clarisse Lucas]

[Text] Cairo, March 27 (AFP)—The PLO and Israel are optimistic that a Hebron security accord will be signed here on Tuesday [29 March] to clear the way for the resumption of autonomy talks after a one-month break.

A senior Palestinian official said Sunday the PLO was putting to one side its demand for the evacuation of the 400 Jewish settlers who live among 120,000 Palestinians in the massacre town of Hebron.

"The departure of the Hebron settlers is a pressing demand so as to prevent further violence, but it is not a precondition," Muhammad Subayh, secretary general of the Palestine National Council or parliament-in-exile, told AFP.

Although Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin has ruled out their withdrawal, an Israeli source said the settlers living in five areas of Hebron could be regrouped.

The PLO and Israel agreed over the weekend that the only serious issue left was the number of Palestinian policemen and Norwegian observers to be deployed in the occupied West Bank town of Hebron.

Israel accepted the deployment of lightly armed police and foreign observers in talks with the Palestinians last week in Tunis and Cairo.

The accord on Hebron could be signed when the two sides reconvene on Tuesday morning in Cairo if the final details are ironed out in time, the PLO's chief negotiator Nabil Sha'th said Saturday.

"As soon as this accord is signed, the negotiations on launching autonomy in Gaza and Jericho will resume immediately," after a one-month suspension by the PLO because of the February 25 massacre of 30 Palestinian worshippers by a settler, he said.

The Palestinian police will be posted at fixed points around Hebron to guard schools, hospitals and the university, said Sha'th. Joint Israeli-Palestinian units would patrol the town.

He implicitly acknowledged that the Israeli army would have the last word on security, saying "the situation in Hebron will be different from Gaza and Jericho," where autonomy is to be launched.

As for the autonomy negotiations, a final accord on the launch will be signed by April 13, the original date on which the Israeli army was to have pulled out of the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho, said Sha'th.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin said earlier that he hoped the autonomy talks would resume on Tuesday along with a last session on the security arrangements for Hebron.

Rabin said an accord was in sight on security for Hebron Palestinians, as demanded by the PLO as a condition for resuming the autonomy negotiations. "I believe we have advanced in the right direction," he said. Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres said implementation of the autonomy accord could start "in one or two months."

A deal on the launch of autonomy was to have come into effect on December 13, under the September 13 Declaration of Principles signed in Washington, but it has been held up mainly by Israeli security concerns.

Israeli state radio said Saturday that Palestinian police would be deployed in nine day's time in Hebron, Jericho and Gaza.

Subayh raised an additional Palestinian demand on Sunday—for police also to be sent to the rest of the West Bank. "The settlers are everywhere and risks of a massacre exist everywhere they live," he said.

"The question of the security of the Palestinians does not only present itself in Hebron," said Subayh.

But Rabin has said the Hebron arrangements were "exceptional," and would not be extended to other West Bank towns such as Nablus or Ramallah.

UN Security Council Resolution 904, adopted on March 18, condemned the Hebron massacre and called for protection for Palestinians in the occupied territories.

After the massacre, the PLO demanded an armed international protection force, the disarming of Jewish settlers and dismantling of certain flashpoint settlements, including those in Hebron.

Inter-Arab Affairs

Arab League Council Holds 101st Ordinary Session

Agenda Issues Noted

NC2603091494 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0835 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 26 Mar (MENA)—The Arab League Council's 101st ordinary session began at the League's General Secretariat headquarters this morning. Yemeni Foreign Minister Muhammad Salim Basindwah is chairing the 2-day conference.

The Arab foreign ministers are discussing a 48-item agenda prepared last week by the Arab countries' permanent delegates to the League.

Heading the issues under discussion is the situation in the occupied Arab territories, of special significance on the wake of the al-Ibrahimi Mosque massacre; the status of Jerusalem; amending the Arab League charter; establishing an Arab court of justice; the situation in Somalia; the Libyan-Western crisis; pan-Arab security; the revival of Arab-European dialogue; and the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

League Secretary Addresses Opening Session

NC2603113794 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1000 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 26 Mar (MENA)—Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid has demanded that Israeli settlers in the occupied Arab territories be completely disarmed and that all settlements in these territories be dismantled and removed in line with UN Security Council Resolution 465.

In his speech to the opening session of the Arab League Council's conference, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid stressed that Israel must implement the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, particularly in connection with protecting people living under occupation. He urged that an effective international presence be expeditiously established in the occupied territories. He declared that the Arab countries are committed to a comprehensive and just peace in line with UN and Arab resolutions.

'Abd-al-Majid said that Israeli procrastinations and inhuman practices have encouraged the settlers' criminal propensities, resulted in greater violence, and created real obstacles to the peace process, which, he noted, cannot continue unless the minimal conditions for restoring trust are met and Israel stops evading its commitments.

He announced that the Arab group at the United Nations has decided to form a troika representing the Arab ambassadors to the United Nations and the heads of the Arab group for the months of February, March, and April. This troika, he said, will hold a meeting with the U.S. permanent delegate to the United Nations. The Arab group also instructed the Egyptian delegation to prepare a draft message on behalf of all Arab countries that expresses a united position on Jerusalem.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said that this message will be approved by the Arab group and sent to UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus-Ghali and to the president of the UN Security Council to be distributed as an official document.

Regarding inter-Arab solidarity, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid explained that the closing of Arab ranks will enable the Arab countries to revise some of the principles and charters governing collective Arab action and set them forth in a new form that is more in line with contemporary Arab wishes. He pointed out that this requires a discussion on amending the Arab League charter and the establishment of an Arab court of justice as a mechanism to solve inter-Arab disputes peacefully and prevent their escalation.

'Abd-al-Majid said that within the context of a comprehensive Arab reconciliation, the Arab League seeks to resolve the problem of the Kuwaiti detainees and those who are missing. He added that this will be a positive factor in allaying the current tensions, both for the families of the Kuwaiti detainees and the missing and in regard to the efforts to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people, in whose territorial integrity we are concerned and interested.

Discussing pan-Arab security, he said: Security, in our view, now means one thing—to be or not to be. He noted that pan-Arab security now has many sides covering most aspects of joint Arab action, both economic and political, as they are two sides of the same coin.

He urged the Arab League Council to work quickly and seriously to restructure the Arab economic situation to help us avoid any negative repercussions, especially from the GATT.

He expressed regret over the continuing crisis between Libya and some Western countries despite Libya's flexible stand and eagerness to settle the crisis in the context of international legitimacy. He called on the three Western parties to be responsive to the efforts by several parties to reach a solution that respects Libya's territorial integrity and is in line with Article 33 of the UN Charter, which calls for resolving differences between states through dialogue and peaceful means.

He reiterated the Arab League's support for the United Arab Emirates' efforts to regain all its legitimate rights and its sovereignty over its three islands in the Gulf. He also expressed his support for the United Arab Emirates' measures to recover these rights and hoped that Iran will respond by handling the issue peacefully and with wisdom.

Speaking about the situation in Somalia, 'Abd-al-Majid praised President Husni Mubarak's initiative that contributed to achieving national reconciliation in Somalia. He said it was time that the fraternal Somali people directed their efforts toward reconstructing their country so that Somalia can resume its role in the Arab arena.

Discussing the situation in Yemen and Sudan, the Arab League secretary general expressed confidence that the Yemeni leaders' wisdom will help overcome this crisis and enhance ties among the people in that nation. He said we are following the situation in Sudan with extreme concern, and expressed his hope that the Arab League Council will adopt a resolution asserting its clear commitment to Sudan's unity and its opposition to any attempt to separate the south.

PLO's Qaddumi Delivers Speech

NC2603103894 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1005 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 26 Mar (MENA)—Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO's Political Department, said in a speech at the opening session of the Arab League Council today that the Palestinians have come under intense pressure to resume the peace talks following the al-Ibrahimi Mosque massacre and before measures are available for protection of the Palestinian people. He called on the cosponsors of the peace process to shoulder their responsibilities in providing security for the Palestinian people.

He added that allowing the massacre to pass without punishment could undermine the peace efforts in the area. Referring to the racist tendencies in the Israeli Government itself, he said that the Israeli Government's actions are characterized by violence against the Palestinians, and that the massacre has exposed Israel's claim to be a democratic country.

Qaddumi affirmed that the PLO is committed to peace, but is not prepared to resume the peace talks under these conditions and until tangible measures are taken to protect the Palestinian people in the occupied territories.

He said that the massacre has singled out the problem of the settlements as a time bomb that does not help advance the peace process.

Qaddumi expressed regret at the recent U.S. position at the UN Security Council regarding the status of Jerusalem, saying it causes concern. He affirmed that the Palestinian people are ready to make sacrifices in order to ensure their legitimate rights, no matter how long this takes.

League Committees Begin Closed Session

NC2603115394 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1055 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 26 Mar (MENA)—The Arab League Council held a closed session this afternoon, following the end of its opening session.

MENA has learned that the Arab League Council will discuss a number of political, economic, legal, and financial matters at the closed session. Four committees have been formed for that purpose: A political committee, an economic committee, a financial and administrative committee, and a legal committee.

The political committee will discuss the Arab boycott of Israel in the second and third degrees—in other words, an indirect boycott. It will listen to a briefing from the secretary of the Arab Boycott Bureau in Damascus on the boycott and its implications for the peace process. The committee will examine the U.S. request that the boycott be lifted on U.S. companies that participate in developing and rehabilitating the Palestinian self-rule areas following the implementation of the Declaration of Principles. The political committee will also debate a report on Arab national security at a time of fast-breaking international changes.

MENA has learned that the economic committee will discuss the formulation of a unified Arab position vis-a-vis GATT, which will be signed in April in Morocco. The economic committee will also discuss the economic repercussions of peace, particularly with regard to the possible establishment of a Middle East market. The committee will also review various agreements concluded by the Arab League and its institutions and assess their effectiveness.

The financial and administrative committee will discuss the contributions by member states to the League's 1994 budget, estimated at $28 million. It is expected to urge the members to pay their contributions on time so as to help the Arab League institutions perform their duties.

The legal committee will discuss a number of important topics, including the status of Palestinian refugees in a number of countries and the care they receive, the performance of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, and a number of legal matters pertaining to the Arab League.

Debate on Charter Amendment Postponed

NC2603124694 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1143 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 26 Mar (MENA)—MENA has learned that the Arab League Council decided at its closed session this afternoon to postpone its debate of the proposed amendment of the Arab League Charter and the formation of an Arab court of justice until the first session of the Arab foreign ministers, to be held following the next Arab summit meeting.

The Arab League's General Secretariat had prepared a proposed amended Arab League Charter, by which resolutions would be passed by a majority of two-thirds of member countries instead of the current requirement for unanimity.

Foreign Ministers Comment on Meeting

NC2603151794 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1420 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 26 Mar (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has emphasized that the Egyptian stance on southern Sudan is clear and resolute. We can never back any attempt to separate southern Sudan from the north.

Speaking to reporters following the closed session of the Arab League ministerial council, Musa said the council decided to postpone discussion on the amendment of the league charter and relevant issues until Arab conditions improve and consensus is obtained on the amendment and its terms.

He noted that the seven-member committee will hold a meeting this evening to discuss the Lockerbie crisis and developments in Libya's crisis with the West.

Touching on a meeting among the foreign ministers of cordon states on the sidelines of the foreign ministers session, 'Amr Musa said: We did not discuss this subject and there are no arrangements to hold such a meeting on the sidelines of the ministerial council session.

Sudanese Foreign Minister Husayn Abu-Salih praised Musa's remarks on southern Sudan, saying: We thank Egypt for this strategic stance, which seeks to preserve Sudanese unity, because Sudan's security is the same as Egypt's and is part of the pan-Arab security.

He described his meeting with 'Amr Musa today as "fraternal".

The Sudanese minister hoped official dialogue will continue between the Egyptian and Sudanese sides in Khartoum. We welcome Minister 'Amr Musa in Sudan to resume dialogue on disputed issues and resolve them, he said.

Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' said that the Arab boycott of Israel was not raised during the new session of the Arab foreign ministers council that started today. What we discussed is the report submitted by the Damascus-based Arab Bureau on the Boycott of Israel, he explained.

Al-Shar' added that Arab parties have agreed to postpone the issue of amending the charter until an Arab summit is held, in view of the importance of the topic.

Saudi Foreign Minister Sa'ud al-Faysal stated that the council's discussions today were constructive and that an agreement was reached to postpone discussion on the amendment of the charter because of its importance.

He added that a number of remarks were made on that topic, including the view that this important matter should be discussed when the Arab atmosphere is more favorable so that the charter can be reviewed after due consideration and away from side issues that can affect Arab solidarity.

Ibrahim al-Bishari, Libya's delegate to the Arab League, said today that he will submit a full report to a seven-member committee that includes the foreign ministers of Egypt, Syria, Libya, Mauritania, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia.

Sudanese, Egyptian Ministers Meet

EA2603202094 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Text] Foreign Minister Husayn Sulayman Abu-Salih stated, following his meeting today with Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, that an agreement had been reached with him on the need to make greater efforts to correct the course of relations between Sudan and Egypt, so as to promote the destiny of the peoples of the Nile Valley.

Concerning attempts to separate southern Sudan from the north, the Sudanese foreign minister said that those attempts would be fruitless. He added that Sudan would absolutely not allow any attempt to dismantle its unity. He said that Egypt had declared, strongly and frankly, its support for Sudan, as it was aware of the dangers of disintegration and fragmentation, not only with regard to Sudan itself, but in the entire region as well.

Dr. Husayn Sulayman Abu-Salih expressed his appreciation at Egypt's strategic stand [word indistinct], out of its concern to preserve the unity of Sudan, as the security of Sudan and Egypt were closely linked.

For his part Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said that he had spoken with Dr. Husayn Sulayman Abu-Salih concerning issues of interest to the countries and the future of relations between them, besides the subjects discussed by the Arab League Council. Mr. 'Amr Musa stressed Egypt's stand on southern Sudan: That it would not support any attempt for the separation of southern Sudan.

Oman, Qatar Press To Lift Israel Boycott

NC2603154094 Paris AFP in English 1502 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, March 26 (AFP)—Arab countries oppose efforts by Oman and Qatar to end a boycott on firms doing business with Israel, a diplomat close to the Arab League said Saturday [26 March].

The two Gulf oil states recently began "intensive efforts" to ease the embargo, but "this campaign did not win the approval" of other Arab countries because of the February 25 Hebron massacre, the diplomat told AFP.

"All the other Arab countries want to maintain the indirect boycott" affecting companies dealing with Israel, the diplomat said on condition his name not be used.

Diplomats, who had expected the Arab League to agree to lift the indirect boycott, said Saturday the "climate was not favorable" because of the massacre of 30 Palestinians by a Jewish settler in the West Bank town of Hebron.

The United States had called on Arab states to ease their 46-year-old trade boycott of Israel in recognition of the accord on Palestinian self-rule signed in September.

But Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' said on arrival in Cairo for the Arab League meeting: "The boycott of Israel was decided because of its occupation of Arab lands.

"It cannot be lifted before Israel withdraws totally from occupied Arab territories and the Palestinians create their own state," al-Shar' said.

Syria made no distinction between the direct boycott of Israel and the indirect boycott, al-Shar' said. Apart from "one or two countries," other Arab states had the same view, he added.

Two-thirds of the Arab League's 22 members would have to support such a move if it came to a vote.

Since the Israeli-PLO accord was signed on September 13, Washington has called for the indirect boycott to be lifted in exchange for US participation in developing the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho where autonomy is to be launched.

Arab countries have boycotted Israel since it was created in 1948. Three years later, they set up a body in charge of drawing up a "black list" of international firms with interests in Israel.

Apart from Egypt, which made peace with Israel in 1979, only Kuwait has lifted the indirect boycott, last year.

Qatari Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Al Thani met in London in January with Israeli counterpart Shim'on Peres and called for a lifting of the boycott.

Oman has invited Israel to attend a multilateral meeting on Middle East water resources on April 17—the first such move by a Gulf country.

Kuwaiti Official: Committed to Boycott

NC2603200594 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1933 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 26 Mar (MENA)—Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, Kuwaiti first deputy prime minister and foreign minister, has stated that his country is committed to the first-degree Arab boycott against Israel [direct dealings with Israel]. He noted that Kuwait previously announced lifting the second- and third-degree boycott against companies dealing with Israel.

In a statement on the sidelines of the Arab League Ministerial Council meeting in Cairo this evening, the Kuwaiti official said his country cannot lift the first-degree boycott before an Arab League decision is issued in light of the developments in the peace process.

On Kuwait's position on the Libyan-Western crisis, al-Sabah said: We support Libya provided that the UN Security Council resolutions are implemented. He pointed out that the embargo against Libya was a Security Council resolution and that Kuwait had nothing to do with its issuance.

He said he does not know what difference it will make if the Libyan suspects are tried in Scotland or any other place.

Syria's al-Shar': Boycott Not on Agenda

JN2603172494 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1615 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Excerpt] Cairo—The Arab League Council concluded its first session at 1400 today. During this session, the Council approved the agenda of the Arab League Council's 101st ordinary session.

Answering reporters' questions after this session, [Syrian] Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' stressed that the Arab boycott of Israel was not included on the agenda of the Arab League Council's session. He added that the Council reviewed the report of the Damascus-based central Arab Boycott Office.

Al-Shar' said: The issue of discussing or lifting the second and third degree of the boycott will not be discussed at the Council's session. He noted that this issue was decided at the Council's economic committee.

Asked about Syria's position on the issue of amending the Arab League Charter, the foreign minister said this issue was postponed until there is a sound and healthy Arab situation so the amendment can be made on sound basis. He said: In view of the importance of this issue, it requires an Arab summit.

Al-Shar' announced that the seven-member ministerial committee charged with following up the Lockerbie crisis will meet at 1700 today to discuss the latest developments in the crisis. It is worth mentioning that the seven-member committee comprises the foreign ministers of Syria, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Tunis, Mauritania, and Libya, as well as the Arab League secretary general.

The Arab League Council is scheduled to resume its meetings at 1630 today in the Arab League Headquarters to continue discussions of topics on its agenda. [passage omitted]

Iraq's al-Sahhaf Meets Gulf Counterparts

JN2603202694 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1935 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 26 Mar (INA)—Iraqi Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf met here today with Yusuf Bin-'Alawi Bin-'Abdallah, the Omani minister of state for foreign affairs. The two ministers discussed points on the agenda, a number of current Arab issues, and Iraqi-Omani ties and ways to promote them. Al-Sahhaf also met with Qatari Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Al Thani and discussed with him developed bilateral relations.

Al-Sahhaf briefed Bin-'Alawi and Al Thani on Iraq's efforts to lift the embargo and the change that occurred in the Security Council for the benefit of Iraqi causes, demonstrating understanding of Iraq's sound and positive position aimed at closing all the files between Iraq and the United Nations.

The two meetings were attended by Sa'di 'Abd-al-Majid al-Faysal, Foreign Ministry under secretary, and Nabil Najm, Iraq's Arab League's permanent representative.

Resolution Issued on Palestinian Issue

NC2603192894 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Text] The Arab League ministerial council resumed its closed session this evening to continue discussion of the items on the agenda, particularly developments in the Middle East peace process, the situation in Golan, south Lebanon, and Somalia, as well as pan-Arab security. Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa chaired the Egyptian delegation.

Our radio correspondent has learned that during its first meeting today, the council adopted a resolution on developments in the Palestinian issue and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The resolution expressed regret at the security and military agreement France signed with Israel, which helps Israel to occupy Arab lands by force.

The resolution called on the UN Security Council, particularly the cosponsors of the peace process, to make efforts to avert the deterioration of the peaceful process due to aggressive Israeli practices in the occupied territories. It called for speeding up the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 465, which calls for eliminating the settlements and views them as obstacles to peace. The resolution affirmed that the establishment of a just and all-embracing peace in the region depends on Israel's commitment to implementing UN Resolutions 242, 338, and 425 and on enabling the Palestinian people to set up their independent state with honorable Jerusalem as its capital.

In the meantime, the Arab League ministerial council voiced its deep concern at current developments in Yemen. In a statement issued today, the council appealed to Yemeni political leaders to double efforts to resolve differences in a manner that enhances unity and contributes to the establishment of stability and peace in Yemen. The council pointed out that unity in Yemen is a national gain and a pan-Arab accomplishment that should be preserved and enhanced.

In another development, the seven-member Arab committee of the council held a meeting this evening under the chairmanship of Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid. The meeting discussed ways to find a peaceful solution to Libya's crisis with the West that preserves Libya's national sovereignty and respects the principles of international law, which stress solving disputes peacefully. The committee has issued a statement to this effect.

The outcome of the committee's meeting will be referred to the ministerial council this evening. Egypt, Syria, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Mauritania are taking part in the committee's meeting.

Council Meetings To Resume 27 Mar

NC2603214894 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2030 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 26 Mar (MENA)—The Arab League council will resume meetings of its 101st session tomorrow morning at the Arab League headquarters. Remaining items on the agenda will be discussed at the meetings, which will be chaired by Yemeni Foreign Minister Muhammad Salim Basindwah.

An official Arab League source said at the end of the evening session today that the council discussed most items on the agenda, notably the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Yemeni problem, Somalia, and Sudan.

The source said the council stressed Sudan's unity and its rejection of any attempts to separate the south. Concerning pan-Arab security, the source said the subject was deferred to the next session for further discussions on the various aspects of the issue in light of current developments.

The source said the council also discussed the Arab League secretary general's report on developments between the previous session and this one and what was implemented from the resolutions of the previous session.

[In a related report, Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic at 2100 GMT on 26 March adds: "Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has said that a number of subjects, foremost of which was the Libyan-Western crisis, were discussed. He said the council will issue a resolution in this respect tomorrow. He said the subject of the Arab boycott against Israel has not yet been brought up before the council.

["Ibrahim al-Bishari, Libya's permanent Arab League envoy, has stated that the seven-member Arab committee has made a proposal concerning the Libyan-Western crisis. It provides for arrangements maintaining Libya's sovereignty and responding to Security Council Resolution 731. He stressed that the next stage will see intensive diplomatic activity in this regard, whether by the Arab League or the seven-member committee."]

Discussion of Israeli Boycott Postponed

NC2703090894 Paris AFP in English 0851 GMT 27 Mar 94

[By Lamia Radi]

[Text] Cairo, March 27 (AFP)—Arab foreign ministers here Sunday [27 March] postponed action on US and other appeals to ease their 46-year-old trade boycott on Israel, amid anger over the Hebron massacre.

The ministers agreed to tackle the boycott issue, which had been on the agenda at the Arab League meeting due to end in Cairo Sunday, at their next session later in the year, participants said.

"The climate is not favorable for lifting the indirect boycott" on international firms dealing with Israel, because of the February 25 massacre, a diplomat close to the Arab League told AFP.

Two-thirds of the Arab League's 22 members would have to support such a move if it came to a vote.

Gulf states Oman and Qatar recently began "intensive efforts" to ease the embargo, but "this lobbying effort did not get the hoped-for results because of the Hebron massacre," the diplomat said.

"All the other Arab countries want to maintain the indirect boycott," according the diplomat, who asked that his name not be used.

Since the Israeli-PLO autonomy accord was signed on September 13, Washington has called for the indirect boycott to be lifted in exchange for US participation in developing the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho, the first two areas earmarked for autonomy under the delayed accord.

For Syria the main issue was not the massacre of 30 Palestinian worshippers by a Jewish settler in the West Bank town of Hebron.

Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' said the boycott "cannot be lifted before Israel withdraws totally from occupied Arab territories and the Palestinians create their own state."

Syria made no distinction between the direct boycott of Arab trade with Israel and the indirect boycott, al-Shar' said.

Syria's official Tishrin newspaper said Sunday that Israel "had not broken off the negotiations with Arab parties, but it is also true it has made no step toward peace and made no effort to help the peace process succeed."

US Commerce Secretary Ronald Brown said in January that Arab League Secretary General 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid had promised to raise the issue of the indirect boycott at the ministerial meeting in Cairo.

As the session opened Saturday, 'Abd-al-Majid reiterated the Arab states' condemnation of the massacre, and calls for adequate international protection for Palestinians in the occupied territories.

Arab countries have boycotted Israel since it was created in 1948. Three years later, they set up a body in charge of drawing up a "black list" of international firms with interests in Israel.

Barring Egypt, which signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979, only Kuwait has lifted the indirect boycott, last year.

The Arab League also postponed debate on creating an Arab court of justice and amending the league's charter, participants said.

Second Day Meetings Resume

NC2703111394 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1005 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA)—Arab foreign ministers resumed meetings at the Arab League's headquarters today. They are scheduled to discuss the remaining items on the agenda of the 101st regular session of the Arab League Council. Yemeni Foreign Minister Muhammad Salim Basindwah is chairing the session.

The ministers are holding a closed session to discuss Arab-European dialogue, Arab-African dialogue, and Arab ties with the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, as well as the political and legal aspects of the issue of Arab and international water resources.

The ministers are also seeking to form a coordinated Arab policy vis-a-vis weapons of mass destruction and to revive efforts to create an area free of these weapons in the Middle East. They are also due to discuss the issue of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the drafting of an Arab charter for human rights.

Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid is expected to hold a news conference following the conclusion of today's session to announce its outcome and final recommendations.

Sudan's Abu-Salih, Musa Hold Meeting

EA2703155794 Khartoum SUNA in English 1017 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Excerpts] Khartoum [place-name as received], 27 March (SUNA)—The Arab League is absolutely engaged in what is occurring in south Sudan, said Dr. Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, the secretary-general of the league Saturday [26 March] in his opening session [as received]. [passage omitted]

He added that south Sudan problem doesn't only concern the Sudanese people, but the whole national security of the Arabs. [passage omitted]

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Husayn Abu-Salih met his Egyptian counterpart, 'Amr Musa. The meeting tackled issues of mutual concern, said Musa, stressing that there will be meeting between him and abu salih in khartoum in the near future. Musa affirmed Egypt's firm stand against the separation of Sudan.

Dr. Abu-Salih hoped that official dialogue between Sudan and Egypt would go ahead to solve issues of differences, hoping that Arab solidarity would be realized. Arab solidarity, he said, is the way that leads to the solution of the political and economic problems.

On Nairobi peace talks, Abu-Salih said that Sudan has put a comprehensive plan for the solution of south Sudan issue, urging the Arab states and international community to support [the] peace initiative sponsored

by [the] IGADD [Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development] states.

Mubarak Talks With Syria's al-Shar'

JN2703161094 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1515 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo—Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak today received Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' in the presence of Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa.

During the meeting, al-Shar' conveyed to President Mubarak greetings from President Hafiz al-Asad. The Egyptian president asked al-Shar' to convey his warm greetings to President al-Asad.

Talks dealt with the regional situation, the peace process, and the current Arab League Council meetings.

Al-Shar' Holds News Conference

NC2703145094 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1115 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa made a statement following President Husni Mubarak's meeting with Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' today. He said that al-Shar' briefed the president on the latest developments in the peace process, the Arab League meeting, several issues of joint Egyptian-Syrian interest, and the coordination of Egyptian-Syrian political moves in the context of collective Arab action and the resumption of the peace negotiations.

Asked about Syria's position on the U.S. President's recent remarks on Jerusalem, al-Shar' replied: Our views on this issue are known. Jerusalem is an inseparable part of the occupied Arab territories and is subject to the same principles governing the rest of the territories.

Al-Shar' affirmed that Israel must withdraw from all the occupied territories because the peace process began with the understanding that the pertinent UN resolutions would be implemented. He noted that these resolutions refer to Jerusalem.

Asked about Syria's position on resuming negotiations, al-Shar' pointed out that Syria's position on peace is clear and no international doubts remain about the necessity of attaining a just and comprehensive peace.

He added that resisting the occupation is a nation's legitimate right, which is only terminated by ending the occupation and is not subject to bargaining.

Asked why no meeting of the Arab cordon states was held on the sidelines of the Arab League Council session, the Syrian foreign minister remarked that actually no invitation was issued for such a meeting, but bilateral discussions were held on the sidelines of the Arab League conference. He added: We will continue these bilateral contacts and when the need for a meeting of the cordon states arises, we will use diplomatic channels to arrange one.

In response to a question whether any new developments had occurred in connection with the Syrian-Israeli negotiations, al-Shar' said there have been no new developments but there is now a better understanding and recognition of the importance of the Geneva summit between Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and U.S. President Clinton in January and its results. He explained that this means there is now a better understanding of Syria's leading role in the peace process.

In connection with the recent U.S. announcement that it received a Syrian response about resuming the Syrian, Jordanian, and Lebanese negotiations with Israel in April, the Syrian foreign minister was asked to comment on the fact that the PLO was not mentioned in this announcement. He was asked if this meant a separation of the PLO's negotiating track from the other three. Al-Shar' replied: Syria has no plans, and I believe our Lebanese and Jordanian brothers have no plans either, to separate our negotiating tracks from the Palestinian track.

The Syrian foreign minister continued: Regrettably the opposite happened. Those in charge of the Palestinian track separated it from the other Arab tracks. This affair is well-known to the Arab citizens and in international circles too.

Al-Shar' pointed out that negotiations between the PLO and Israel have actually been resumed in Tunis and then in Cairo and will continue. He said the Palestinians did not coordinate this resumption of the talks with the other Arab parties concerned with the peace process.

He added: In Syria, of course, we attach great importance to coordination and will maintain our bilateral communications, especially with our Lebanese and Jordanian brothers.

Responding to a question on Israeli Prime Minister Rabin's recent statement on the need for Syria to show its genuine desire for peace to the Israeli people so that Israel may define the line from which it will withdraw from the Golan, al-Shar' said that withdrawal from the Golan is a lawful, legal, and binding demand according to Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and Article 25 of the UN Charter, which expressly calls for member countries' commitment to implementing Security Council resolutions. He stressed that Israeli withdrawal from the Golan is not negotiable and, consequently, total withdrawal is a requirement that must be met in accordance with Resolutions 242 and 338. He said: Despite this, Syria called for total peace in return for total withdrawal and we are waiting to hear similar talk from the Israelis, that is, to declare that they are ready for total withdrawal in return for total peace.

In reply to a question on Syria's position on the Arab boycott of Israel, al-Shar' said that the Arab boycott of Israel is a legal action and is in accordance with the Arab countries' declaration made as a result of the state of war between the Arab countries and Israel and Israeli occupation of Arab territories. He said that as long as the

reasons for the boycott are valid, the Arab boycott will remain binding to the Arab countries collectively or individually. He stressed that it is wrong to request the Arabs to cancel the boycott while Israel continues to occupy Arab territory. Such a demand, he said, gives the impression that you ask me to cancel a legal and lawful decision to support an illegal and unlawful position, namely the occupation of land. He said: The boycott of Israel is legal and lawful but the occupation is illegal and unlawful.

Al-Shar' on Boycott, French-Israeli Ties

NC2703161394 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1400 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA)—Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' has declared that the Arab League Council adopted a resolution calling on the international community to put pressure on Israel to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and place its nuclear weapons under international inspection. This, he added, falls within the context of the Arab states' demand to free the Middle East of nuclear weapons.

In a news conference he held this afternoon at the Arab League headquarters, al-Shar' said that the Arab League Council had agreed on a unified Arab position when the time comes to renew the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, so that Israel may not be excluded from signing this treaty. He noted that weapons of mass destruction are dangerous to pan-Arab security and, therefore, it is natural for the Arabs to defend their interests.

On the Arab position toward France following its recent agreement on military and security cooperation with Israel, al-Shar' said: We were surprised by the noticeable consolidation of French-Israeli ties recently and following the Israeli massacre at the al-Ibrahimi Mosque. It came at a time when we are discussing the peace process and despite the fact that Israel possesses a large arsenal of all types of weapons and is occupying Arab lands, he added. Al-Shar' emphasized that the matter had been brought up during the meetings of the Arab League Council, which unanimously denounced this step as one that does not serve the peace process in the region and harms Arab-French ties, which were marked by friendship and balance.

The Syrian foreign minister noted that it had been agreed within the Arab League Council not to debate the issue of the Arab boycott of Israel during the current session. He stressed that the boycott cannot be lifted without Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories. He added: The boycott is a law, and the law is indivisible. Besides, there is no Arab decision to lift the boycott, and if some states have made unilateral decisions in this regard, this has nothing to do with the Arab League.

Discussing peace, al-Shar' said Syria rejects the step-by-step policy and seeks to achieve a comprehensive and just peace that will secure the Arabs' legitimate rights. He noted that Syria's stand stipulates that Jerusalem is part of the occupied Arab territories and Syria demands a complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan in return for a comprehensive peace.

He said Israel has not yet agreed to this measure and he affirmed that, as long as the peace is not comprehensive, it will not lead to security and stability in the region.

He pointed out that the Arab League Council discussed the water issue and expressed its support for the Syrian stance on the Tigris an Euphrates Rivers, two international rivers to which international laws and norms apply. He said the council asked Syria to present legal and political studies on this problem because water security is vital to the Arab countries.

He added that the Arab League Council reviewed numerous problems facing the Arab countries, such as Iraq, Libya, Sudan, Yemen, Algeria, and Somalia. He noted that such discussion is a positive factor in openness among the Arabs to push things in the direction of Arab reconciliation. He said the Arab nation should not pause at the Gulf crisis and that it must work to remedy the current serious disorder.

Al-Shar' Meets Lebanese, Sudanese Counterparts

JN2703200894 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] On the sidelines of the Arab League Council meetings, Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' met with Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz this afternoon.

Talks dealt with developments in the peace process and with several issues pertaining to coordination and cooperation between the two fraternal countries. They also exchanged views on the topics listed on the agenda of the Arab League Council.

Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' also met with Sudanese Foreign Minister Dr. Husayn Abu-Salih this afternoon. Talks focused on the situation in southern Sudan.

The Sudanese foreign minister expressed Sudan's appreciation for Syria's positions supporting the unity of the Sudanese territory and people.

Algeria Warns League of 'Conspiracy'

LD2703132494 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Excerpt] The 101st session of Arab foreign ministers ends today in Cairo by ratifying various resolutions, following two days of meetings.

Before the end, the Algerian delegate announced that the foreign conspiracy against the stability of Algeria was, in fact, directed against all Arab countries.

Wahiba Ben Chehab has the details:

[Ben Chehab] The Algerian delegate, Foreign Ministry Secretary General Mohamed Hannache, said that despite Algeria's difficult circumstances, it had the means to shoulder its domestic and foreign responsibilities.

In that context, Hannache reiterated to the council session yesterday in Cairo Algeria's support for and solidarity with the Palestinian people and the other Arab peoples struggling to restore their territories.

The secretary general of the Algerian Foreign Ministry pointed out that the stability of Algeria was targeted by external elements and that the conspiracy was not against Algeria only, but also against all Arab countries. [passage omitted]

Draft Resolution on Golan Reported

JN2703150994 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo—The Arab League Council has resumed meetings at the Arab League General Secretariat's headquarters at the foreign ministers' level with the participation of [Syrian] Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar'.

The Council held a morning session and an evening session yesterday, and addressed several topics on the agenda, led by the situation in the occupied Syrian Golan. The Council also discussed a draft resolution on the occupied Syrian Golan stressing the Council's rejection of all measures that the Israeli occupation authorities have taken and are taking with the aim of changing the legal, natural, and demographic situation of the occupied Syrian Golan.

The draft resolution reaffirms that the Israeli measures extending sovereignty to the Golan are illegal, null, and void, and that they violate both the international agreements and the UN Charter and resolutions, which emphasize that Israel's decision on 14 December 1981 to annex the occupied Syrian Golan is illegal, null and void. The Knesset's decision, made on 11 November 1991, in this regard, is also null and void and has no legal force.

In the draft resolution, the Council demands that the Security Council assume its responsibilities toward Israel's compliance with the resolutions of international legitimacy. These resolutions provide for both full withdrawal from the Syrian Golan and for supporting the Syrian Government in its efforts to implement these resolutions.

The draft resolution also calls on the international community, particularly the United States, to force Israel to comply with the UN and other international resolutions pertaining to full withdrawal from both the Golan and other occupied Arab territories. It stresses support for the steadfastness of the Syrian Arab citizens in the Golan in their confrontation of both the Israeli occupation and its repressive practices, and also for their insistence on adhering to both their territory and their Syrian Arab identity.

The draft resolution stresses the need to implement the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 for the Syrian citizens in the occupied Golan. It renews the Arab states' emphasis of their firm support for Syria's just demands and right to regain the entire occupied Syrian Golan based on the peace process and the resolutions of international legitimacy, particularly Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

Al-Sahhaf Meets Moroccan, Tunisian Counterparts

JN2703141894 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1303 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (INA)—Iraqi Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf met here today with Abdellatif Filali, Moroccan minister of state for foreign affairs. The two ministers discussed bilateral relations, ways to strengthen them, the current Arab situation, and the agenda of the current session of the Arab League Council.

Al-Sahhaf also met with Tunisian Foreign Minister Habib Ben Yahya and discussed with him bilateral relations and a number of Arab issues of common interest.

An INA correspondent in Cairo said that al-Sahhaf informed Filali and Ben Yahya of Iraq's efforts to lift the blockade, the developments that took place in the Security Council in Iraq's favor, and Iraq's clear stand on the Security Council resolutions.

Al-Sahhaf Meets Sudanese, Comoran Counterparts

JN2703152294 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1400 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (INA)—[Iraqi] Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf met on the sidelines of the Arab League Council meetings at noon here today with Sudanese Foreign Minister Dr. Hasan Abu-Salih. The two ministers discussed a number of Arab issues, particularly the threats to Sudan by external forces, the agenda of the Arab League Council meeting, and bilateral relations.

Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf also met with Comoran Foreign Minister Said Mohamed Said Ahmed, who is attending an Arab League meeting for the first time. The two ministers discussed bilateral relations and ways to develop these relations in the interest of the two countries. They also discussed a number of Arab issues and the agenda of the Arab League meeting.

The two meetings were attended by Sa'd 'Abd-al-Majid al-Faysal, under secretary of the Foreign Ministry, and Dr. Nabil Najm, Iraq's permanent representative at the Arab League.

Al-Sahhaf Briefs Arab League Chief

NC2703180094 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1710 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA)—Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid met here tonight with Iraqi Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf.

The two officials discussed the situation in the Arab world and the Arab League's resolutions at the current League session. The Iraqi minister briefed Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid on conditions in Iraq under the siege imposed on it and on the Security Council stand.

The meeting was attended by Ambassador Nabil Najm, Iraq's envoy to the Arab League.

Al-Sahhaf Meets Mauritanian Counterpart

JN2703190394 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1810 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (INA)—[Iraqi] Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf met at the Arab League headquarters in Cairo today with Mauritanian Foreign Minister Mohamed Salem Ould Lekhal on the sidelines of the 101st Session of the Arab League Council.

The talks dealt with bilateral relations, strengthening joint cooperation, a number of Arab issues, and the agenda of the Arab League Council.

Al-Sahhaf informed his Mauritanian counterpart of Iraq's efforts to lift the embargo on its people and the Security Council's stand toward these efforts. Al-Sahhaf also informed the Mauritanian counterpart of the positive move by a number of the permanent members of the Security Council in Iraq's favor and their understanding of its viewpoint.

Al-Sahhaf Confers With Musa

JN2703204094 Baghdad INA in Arabic 2010 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (INA)—Iraqi Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf met with Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa late last night. The two ministers discussed the latest Arab developments and exchanged views on the topics listed on the agenda of the 101st session of the Arab League Council, particularly those related to enhancing joint Arab action.

An INA correspondent in Cairo said al-Sahhaf briefed his Egyptian counterpart on the latest developments between Iraq and the UN Security Council and the results of the latest review [of sanctions], which echoed positive attitudes by some Security Council members toward Iraq.

Dr. Nabil Najm, Iraq's permanent representative to the Arab League, and Dr. Muhammad Nu'man Jalal, Egypt's permanent Arab League representative, attended the meeting.

Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf also met this evening with Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid. Talks dealt with the latest Arab developments, the Arab League agenda, and effective means to reactivate joint Arab cooperation in order to confront the challenges facing the Arab nation.

The INA correspondent in Cairo said the secretary general hoped the Security Council and other states will understand Iraq's position and lift the embargo as soon as possible in order to end the suffering of the Iraqi Arab people.

Dr. Nabil Najm, Iraq's permanent representative to the Arab League, attended the meeting.

Israel To Be Invited to Arms Control Meeting

NC2703141194 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1325 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA)—Qatari Foreign Minister Hamad Bin-Jasim Al Thani has stated that the Arms Control Committee of the multilateral talks will meet on 2 May in Doha, Qatar, adding that an invitation will be sent to Israel to attend the meeting.

Speaking to reporters here this afternoon on the sidelines of the Arab League Council meetings, the Qatari minister said that during his meeting with Iraqi Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf yesterday, he urged Iraq to implement the Security Council resolutions on the Gulf war so that the embargo imposed on Iraq could be lifted. He noted that contacts are under way to study Iraq's proposal to form a popular committee from the Gulf states to visit Iraq to resolve the problem of Kuwaiti prisoners there. The results of these contacts, he added, are not clear yet.

On reports that Qatar will extend a natural gas pipeline to Israel, the Qatari foreign minister said: The Israeli side has proposed this matter to us but we told them that we could not talk about it as long as Israel is occupying Arab territory.

League Welcomes UN Resolution 904

NC2703143694 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1342 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA)—In a statement released today, the Arab League Council welcomed UN Security Council Resolution 904 providing protection for the Palestinians. It called on the international community to pressure Israel to immediately implement the clauses of the resolution and provide international protection for the Palestinian people in the occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem.

The Arab League Council called on the two cosponsors of the peace conference to shoulder their responsibilities to guarantee the safety of the Palestinian people and their property in the occupied territories and to prevent recurrence of the criminal acts committed by Jewish settlers and conspirators. The Arab League Council's 101st session hailed the Palestinian people's steadfastness under the occupation and their insistence on obtaining their freedom and continuing their steadfastness until the Israeli occupation forces withdraw from all the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem. The statement noted that the Arab League Council heard numerous statements and speeches regarding the ugly crime committed in the al-Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron by Israeli settlers in suspicious collusion with Israeli Army units.

Yemen's Basindwah on Libyan Sanctions

LD2703143094 Tripoli JANA in English 1412 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, al Rabia [Mar] 27, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—The Yemeni Foreign Minister Muhammad Salim Basindwah condemned the unfair coercive measures imposed on the Great Jamahiriyah by the western countries through the so called Security Council.

In a statement to JANA in Cairo today, the Yemeni foreign minister reaffirmed the solidarity of Yemen with the Great Jamahiriyah in countering these measures. He stressed the need for the prompt lifting of the unfair measures which violate all international laws and conventions.

Arab League-Libyan Tension Reported 'Contained'

NC2803055594 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2220 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA)—Arab diplomatic sources said today that the tension that has marred relations between Libya and the Arab League has been contained. The tension rose when Jum'ah al-Fazzani, secretary of the Libyan General People's Committee for Unity [title as received], announced that his country was thinking of withdrawing from the Arab League because of the latter's failure to solve Arab problems, including the Libyan-Western crisis.

The sources said that the desire shown by Ibrahim al-Bishari, Libya's permanent envoy to the Arab League, to head his country's delegation to the Arab League Council meetings was a clear signal that this tension is over.

The sources added that Libya is satisfied with the Arab League's stance on the Libyan-Western crisis and that the Libyan permanent envoy expressed his country's appreciation for the role played by the Arab League and the seven-member committee in solving this problem.

The sources went on to say that the Arab League secretary general played a vital role in the meeting of the seven-member committee and left his print on the resolution issued on the Libyan-Western crisis issued at the conclusion of the Arab League Council session, which emphasized the League's support for Libyan efforts to find a peaceful solution to this crisis.

Kuwaiti Minister on Iraq, Arab Boycott

NC2703192494 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1702 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Kuwait [as received], 27 Mar (MENA)—Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad, Kuwaiti first deputy prime minister and foreign minister, has praised the stand of the Egyptian leadership, Government, and people in support of Arab nations' causes and Egypt's responsibilities in this respect, especially its honorable and historic stand on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

At a news conference held at the Arab League this evening on the sidelines of the Arab League Council meetings, he said Egypt rejected Iraqi aggression and launched the first formula of Arab legitimacy rejecting aggression and occupation. He added that Egypt's stand took shape in an effective participation in efforts to eliminate the effects of aggression.

He expressed his belief that the Security Council will not lift the sanctions imposed on Iraq as long as Iraq continues to disrespect Kuwait's independence and sovereignty, refuses to implement Security Council Resolution 833, refuses to repatriate Kuwaiti and other detainees, and refuses to return all property and compensate those affected by the aggression.

He said: We are all suffering because of the Iraqi people's suffering but we must emphasize that the one responsible for the continuation of this suffering is Iraq, which rejects international resolutions, particularly Security Council Resolutions 706 and 712, which provide food and medicine for the Iraqi people.

He added that Iraq is still threatening security and stability in the Gulf region and is far from fully implementing all articles of the Security Council resolutions on its aggression against Kuwait. He went on to say that Iraq procrastinates and is selective about these resolutions and is pursuing its repressive measures against its people.

Replying to a question on Kuwaiti detainees held in Iraq, he said the detainees' files that were forwarded to the International Red Cross were full and complete but Iraqi authorities did not allow the Red Cross to visit Iraq and search for the detainees. He turned down an Iraqi proposal to form a popular committee from the Gulf countries to visit Iraq for a fact-finding mission on the detainees.

He said Kuwait has done a great deal for Arab solidarity and it is not happy with the Arab world's current fractured situation. But, he added, the Kuwaiti people

find it difficult to accept reconciliation with Iraq unless it implements all Security Council resolutions.

He noted that he intends to visit the Arab Maghreb countries soon to improve ties with them. He stressed Kuwait's identity and its Arab affiliation despite joint military maneuvers with Western countries.

He said Kuwait will sign a security accord with Russia as part of its efforts to sign security accords with the Security Council's permanent members.

The Kuwaiti foreign minister said his country has extended development aid for the Iraqi people in the north and south and affirmed that Kuwait does not favor the partition of Iraq. He said he has good ties with the Iraqi opposition but stressed that this does not mean an alliance with the opposition to overthrow the Iraqi regime.

He noted that Kuwait has lifted the boycott in the second and third degrees on companies that deal with Israel but affirmed that Kuwait will not lift the first-degree, direct boycott of Israel until after Israeli forces have withdrawn from the occupied Arab territories. He said his country is not prepared to host Israelis in the framework of the Middle East multilateral peace talks.

Answering a question on the demarcation of the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border, the Kuwaiti foreign minister said the territory that was given to Kuwait by the UN agreement did not result in the addition of a single inch of Iraqi land to Kuwait and, thus, Iraq lost nothing because this territory was originally Kuwaiti.

[In an earlier Cairo-datelined report of the news conference, Cairo MENA in Arabic at 1538 GMT on 27 March added: "Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad, Kuwaiti first deputy prime minister and foreign minister, announced that his country will host a conference of the Damascus Declaration countries in June."]

Qatari Minister on Lifting Embargo on Iraq

JN2703190694 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1805 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (INA)—Qatari Foreign Minister Hamad Bin-Jasim Al Thani has reiterated his country's firm stand on the need to lift the embargo imposed on the people of Iraq. Speaking to reporters in Cairo today on the sidelines of the Arab League Council meeting, the Qatari foreign minister said that relations with Iraq are going well and are continuously developing in the interest of the Iraqi and Qatari peoples and the Arab nation.

Answering a question by an INA correspondent in Cairo on Qatar's stand vis-a-vis the attempts to prolong the embargo imposed on Iraq, the Qatari foreign minister said that Qatar is working toward ending the suffering of the Iraqi people as soon as possible because we cannot remain silent about the effects of the sanctions, adding that it is in the interest of the nation to end this situation.

The Qatari minister said that he met with [Iraqi] Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf and discussed with him issues related to lifting the blockade imposed on the people of Iraq, noting that Iraqi-Qatari relations have never ceased.

The Qatari minister said that Qatar is playing an Arab role to bring closer the viewpoints of the Arab parties and brothers everywhere in the interest of the nation's solidarity and strength.

Jordan's al-Hasan on Results of Session

JN2703213394 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] The Arab League Ministerial Council is scheduled to end its meetings of the 101st session held at the Arab League headquarters in Cairo tonight. In a telephone conversation with our newsdesk correspondent Suhayl Khuri, Talal Sat'an al-Hasan, minister of state for foreign affairs, who is taking part in these meetings, spoke about the results of this session:

[Begin recording] [Khuri] Good evening Your Excellency.

[Al-Hasan] Good evening.

[Khuri] What results did you achieve during the meetings of the Arab League Ministerial Council in Cairo?

[Al-Hasan] During the four meetings held yesterday and today, the Arab League Council discussed a number of important issues and reviewed the agenda items. Foremost of these issues were the Palestinian cause and developments in the peace process. Moreover, the ministers discussed the horrific Israeli crime perpetrated in the holy Ibrahimi Mosque in the middle of the holy month of Ramadan and its following coercive measures against the defenseless Palestinian citizens.

At the council, I explained His Majesty King Husayn's immediate efforts in the wake of this crime and the Jordanian Government's measures and contacts. Through these measures and contacts, the Jordanian Government expressed its clear condemnation of this crime, held Israel fully responsible, demanded that the international community shoulder its responsibilities and force Israel to provide necessary international protection for the Palestinian people, and stressed that racist settlement building and settlements must be removed as they represent an obstacle to peace.

The council also reviewed developments in the peace process and the resolutions we adopted in the past to support this process since it is a strategic Arab choice to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The council discussed joint Arab action. It decided to postpone making decisions on the issue of pan-Arab security. Jordan had presented a detailed study on this issue during the council's previous session proceeding from Jordan's concern about this issue and since it is

considered a priority issue. The council also decided to postpone the issue of amending the Arab League's charter because it is closely linked to the issue of pan-Arab security.

[Khuri] When do you expect the Ministerial Council to end its discussion of the agenda items and issue a final statement?

[Al-Hasan] Of course, the council will hold a meeting in a short while to review all the decisions after the committees have ended their meetings. The council will hold a general session to review all these decisions.

[Khuri] Your Excellency: How do you assess the atmosphere of the Ministerial Council's meetings?

[Al-Hasan] I can say that this meeting was positive.

[Khuri] Thank you Your Excellency.

[Al-Hasan] You are welcome. [end recording]

Arab League Council Appoints New Officials

NC2703180194 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1610 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA)—The Arab League Council currently meeting in Cairo has decided to appoint Sa'id Kamal, Palestinian ambassador in Cairo and permanent envoy to the Arab league, as assistant secretary general for Palestine affairs at the Arab League, succeeding Ambassador Muhammad al-Farra, a Palestinian, whose term has ended.

The Arab League Council decided to appoint 'Abd-al-Rahman al-Sajibani, a Saudi, as assistant secretary general for economic affairs, succeeding Dr. Yusuf Ni'matallah, a Saudi, who resigned for health reasons.

It decided to extend the term of Ambassador Daw Suwaydan, a Libyan, as deputy assistant secretary general for information affairs at the Arab league for another five years.

The state of Palestine will nominate a new envoy to the Arab League to succeed Ambassador Sa'id Kamal.

Arab League Council Concludes Session

NC2703210894 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2058 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA)—The Arab League Council concluded its 101st session tonight following two days of debates that discussed a number of important Arab issues, including continuing the Arab boycott of Israel until the withdrawal of the latter's forces from the occupied Arab territories, support for the Palestinian people and the provision of protection for it, solidarity with the Libyan al-Jamahiriyah in its crisis with the West, and commitment to the Arabism of Jerusalem.

MENA learned that the ministerial council stressed in its meetings the need for a comprehensive Arab reconciliation and the importance of Arab water security. The council also decided to lift the Arab boycott of Liberia, which used to cooperate with Israel.

Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid will hold a news conference later tonight to explain the outcome of the session.

League Chief Views Outcome of Session

NC2703213894 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] The Arab League Council concluded tonight its 101st session, which was held under the chairmanship of Yemeni Foreign Minister Muhammad Salim Basindwah, at Arab League headquarters .

Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid held a news conference, in which he stressed that the session was eventful and beneficial. He said that there is Arab interest and the highest level of coordination in making the Middle East region free from weapons of mass destruction. He added that there is a unified Arab concept on reassessing the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty during 1995.

He also said that the council decided to lift the boycott of Liberian companies that were on the boycott list.

On the obstacles impeding Arab reconciliation, he said that the issue is still under study and, despite the passage of one year since this issue was raised, it still needs some time in view of the consequences of the Gulf crisis.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said that some Arab countries' demand to amend the Arab League Charter does not mean closing the door on his initiative to set up the Arab Court of Justice and achieve Arab reconciliation.

On Jerusalem, he said that the Arab League has reiterated its firm stand on the Arabism of Jerusalem and the inalienable Arab rights and that efforts are now being held at the highest levels on current Arab issues, such as Somalia, Yemen, and the Libyan-Western crisis. In this respect, he praised President Husni Mubarak's efforts to attain a peace declaration between the Somali factions.

On Arab water security, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said that the Arab foreign ministers discussed this issue carefully and decided to have more studies on the protection of Arab waters.

More on 'Abd-al-Majid's News Conference

NC2803064194 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2147 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA)—Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid stressed that the 101st session of the Arab League Council was eventful and was characterized by the very high-level presence of foreign

ministers. He added that the session dealt with a number of political, economic, legal, and financial issues that concern Arab countries.

Speaking at a news conference tonight following the conclusion of the session, he said that this two-day session was held at a very sensitive and critical time dominated by the consequences of the al-Ibrahimi Mosque massacre.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid underlined the Arab League's desire to give impetus to the comprehensive and just peace process in the Middle East. He also underlined the Arab League's commitment to the Arabism of Jerusalem and said that this issue will never be relinquished.

He explained that the Arab League Secretariat General issued a statement several days ago expressing concern over reports about new U.S. statements that Jerusalem is Israel's capital. He noted that the U.S. Embassy in Cairo has denied these statements and stressed Washington's firm stance on the Jerusalem issue.

The Arab League secretary general said that the issue of amending the League's charter has been postponed because of the differences in the views of the member states on this issue. He explained that identical views were required on the concept of the amendment proposed by the Arab League's secretariat general, but this does not mean that the amendment has been rejected. He called for respecting the views of all the Arab parties, adding: Differences in views do not spoil an issue.

Regarding his initiative on Arab reconciliation, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said that it is now being studied. He added that he got the feeling from the ministers participating in the session that they accept the reconciliation proposal but that the matter will require more time because the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 has left a painful wound.

He said that he raised the following question: Since we are facing an Arab-Israeli reconciliation, hasn't the time come for holding an inter-Arab reconciliation?

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid urged patience on the issue of Arab reconciliation and expressed his belief that it will happen in the future. He noted that no one spoke about Arab reconciliation a year ago but it is now on every tongue and has become a theme of a number of intellectual seminars. He said that the Egyptian paper AL-AHRAM will soon host a seminar on this issue.

Regarding the Arab League's stance on the Libyan-Western crisis, the secretary general said that the seven-member committee charged with discussing this crisis met on the sidelines of the council's session and discussed the developments. He added that the council felt Libya's desire to find a solution that will be compatible with international law and preserve that country's dignity and sovereignty. He said that the Arab League Council backed the Libyan proposal that the two suspects in the Lockerbie incident be tried before the International Court of Justice in the Hague with Scottish judges sitting on the bench and Scottish laws, which are more flexible than British ones, applied.

He described this proposal as practical and emphasized Libya's flexibility in solving the crisis, adding that no country hands over its citizens to another country to be tried there.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said that the council decided to lift the boycott imposed on Liberia because of its dealings with Israel.

He said that the League Council decided to draw up a comprehensive Arab concept on setting up a zone free from weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East region, which will be submitted to the League Council at its 102nd session scheduled to be held at Arab League headquarters.

He said that the Islamic Republic of Comorro asked that the next session be held there, but no decision has been made on this matter.

Al-Shar' Leaves Cairo for Damascus

NC2803094794 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0925 GMT 28 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 28 Mar (MENA)—Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' left Cairo for Damascus this morning after a three-day visit to Egypt. During his stay in Cairo al-Shar' participated in the meetings of the 101st ordinary session of the Arab Foreign Ministers Council. The meetings ended yesterday.

Palestinian Affairs

'Urayqat on Talks, Arab Coordination, Clinton

NC2703101594 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Telephone interview with Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, head of the Palestinian delegation to the Arab-Israeli peace talks, in Jerusalem, by Muhammad al-Aswad, in Cairo; date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Al-Aswad] Welcome to our program.

['Urayqat] Thank you.

[Al-Aswad] Dr. 'Urayqat, let us begin with the situation in the occupied territories. The occupied territories are simmering with tension as a result of the Israeli repression of the Palestinians. You live in the occupied territories; how do you assess the situation there?

['Urayqat] The situation is this: Since the terrorist attack in the al-Ibrahimi Mosque, massacres have occurred daily. The Israeli Army is using live ammunition against the Palestinians, leading to the deaths of dozens and the wounding of hundreds. It is a picture of daily carnage. A residential neighborhood in Hebron has been hit by 168

antitank rockets. The unjustified measures taken by the Israeli army are exacerbating the situation. A curfew is in force and all the occupied territories live under siege, all of which seriously undermine the economic, educational and health conditions.

[Al-Aswad] Dr. 'Urayqat, Palestinian and Israeli negotiators speak of progress concerning the deployment of foreign observers and Palestinian police in Hebron and the occupied West Bank. Palestinian and Israeli negotiators, having held 14 hours of talks in Cairo, agreed to meet again on Tuesday [29 March] in an effort to reach a final agreement. How do you see this development?

['Urayqat] First of all, I would like to make this clear: The talks recently held in Tunisia and Cairo aimed to find a mechanism for implementing Resolution 904, particularly with regard to international protection for the Palestinian people. These talks do not involve negotiations with regard to the Gaza-Jericho or Oslo agreements. Second, with a view to the practical steps on the basic level, there are measures that still need to be taken. To focus on the Palestinian police and international presence but overlook the need to remove the settlers from the heart of Hebron will, in my opinion, complicate matters further.

Efforts should now be focused on evacuating the settlers from the heart of Hebron because they create a flash point of tension and trouble. Looking back, it was the settlers who attacked Hebron University, killing four people; who set fire to shops; who rampaged through the city; and who harassed the population.

I am afraid that deployment of Palestinian or even international forces while the status quo remains unchanged in Hebron will fail to resolve any problem. Israel should therefore take a major step by evacuating the Jewish settlers from the heart of Hebron.

[Al-Asad] Dr. 'Urayqat, Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yosi Beilin announced that it is possible to cut short the transitional period, which was supposed to last for five years. He said that the Israelis and Palestinians should start talking about a permanent settlement a few months after the Gaza-Jericho agreement is implemented. What do you think of this statement?

['Urayqat] Our position has always been that we should enter into the final phase of negotiations immediately. This has been the Palestinian position right from the beginning. As you know, conditions were imposed on us in Madrid and we were forced to enter into a transitional and then a final phase.

As for Beilin's statement, let me be frank. Israel is speaking with too many tongues all at once: Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin says one thing, Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres says another thing, Beilin comes up with a third view; and Deputy Defense Minister Mordekhay Gur expresses a fourth opinion, and so on and so forth.

What the Israeli Government must do is turn the statement by the deputy foreign minister into official policy. It happened in the past that officials, other than the deputy foreign minister, made proposals that could have boosted the peace process, but the Israeli cabinet silenced them. I fear that Beilin's proposal will meet the same fate once it is brought before the Israeli cabinet.

[Al-Aswad] Dr. 'Urayqat, Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat's political adviser Dr. Nabil Sha'th and [chief Israeli negotiator at the Cairo talks] Amnon Shahaq have announced that they agreed on a draft joint document which will be submitted to the Palestinian and Israeli leaders. Do you know anything about this agreement?

['Urayqat] I have no information about this document. What I wish to make clear is that the current talks in Cairo seek to find a mechanism to implement UN Security Council Resolution 904. They are not talks about the Gaza-Jericho plan or the Oslo agreement. I believe it is too early to speak of an agreement, even an initial one, because the Israeli Government remains intransigent on the basic issue of evacuating the settlers from Hebron. I personally believe that it is too early to make optimistic statements.

[Al-Aswad] Do you think current Arab backing for the Palestinian negotiators is sufficient or adequate? What further backing are the Arabs required to offer to the Palestinian position?

['Urayqat] First of all, inter-Arab coordination is flawed, although this is not the time to speak of it. Two days ago, U.S. President Clinton made a statement about the status of Jerusalem. For this reason, on behalf of all Arabs and Palestinians, I urge all Arab leaders, notably Egyptian President Husni Mubarak, to send an urgent message to President Clinton asking him to clarify his position on the remarks attributed to him about Jerusalem. If it is true that Clinton said Jerusalem is Israel's eternal capital, then I believe that the Arab nation and Arab leaders should rally together and reassert their united position that there can be no peace without Jerusalem. We should keep in mind brother Abu-'Ammar's [Yasir 'Arafat] pronouncement that four red lines surround Jerusalem: an Arab line, a Muslim line, a Palestinian line, and a Christian line. The current peace process and the current events concern every Arab. At least, we hope that is so. This is not a purely Palestinian-Israeli affair. We are looking for total Arab coordination that will lay down strategic Arab guidelines for the bilateral and multilateral negotiations. We hope this will happen because what we do now will determine the region's fate for many years to come. This should concern every Arab from the Atlantic to the Gulf.

[Al-Aswad] Dr. 'Urayqat, you referred to the U.S. President's position on Jerusalem. This position and the reports circulating about it have really provoked widespread Arab reaction. However, when correspondents representing the international media asked the U.S President about the substance of his remarks on the status of

Jerusalem to the leaders of the U.S. Jewish lobby, he replied in these exact words: I told them what I also say publicly; namely, that the PLO-Israeli Declaration of Principles states that the fate of Jerusalem will be determined by the final status talks. What is your comment?

['Urayqat] Even this is a retraction of former U.S. positions. When we say that Jerusalem's final status will be determined by the negotiations, we mean both East and West Jerusalem and an ultimate decision on sovereignty over the city. Since 1967 the U.S. position has been that East Jerusalem is an integral part of the occupied territories. This situation continues. We would like the Arab leaders to send a message to President Clinton urging him to reiterate this U.S. position. Failing to reiterate this position constitutes a retraction in itself, a very serious matter.

[Al-Aswad] Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, thank you every much.

['Urayqat] You are welcome.

Officials Deny Negotiations To Resume 29 Mar

NC2503183094 Paris AFP in English 1748 GMT 25 Mar 94

[By Jean-Luc Renaudie]

[Text] Jericho, Occupied West Bank, March 25 (AFP)—Palestinian officials Friday [25 March] denied Israeli reports that autonomy negotiations would resume in Cairo Tuesday, insisting that full agreement must first be reached on protection for Palestinians in the massacre town of Hebron.

Sa'ib 'Urayqat, a senior peace negotiator, said the two sides must press on with talks held this week in Tunis and Cairo, "to agree on measures to protect Palestinians in Hebron, faced with settler violence."

"No date has been set for resuming the negotiations on (Palestinian) self-rule in the Gaza Strip and Jericho" in the West Bank, 'Urayqat told AFP here.

Earlier an aide to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin told AFP that the autonomy negotiations would resume in Cairo Tuesday, one month after the PLO suspended the talks over the massacre of 30 Palestinian worshippers by a Jewish settler in a Hebron mosque.

Israeli state radio said both sides had agreed that "several dozen" Palestinian police would be deployed in Hebron at the beginning of April, notably outside municipal buildings and the university.

The Palestinian police would also patrol jointly with Israeli soldiers, under overall army command, the radio said.

'Urayqat said the Israeli government was presenting the security issue the wrong way.

"It is not a question of knowing whether Palestinian police or foreign observers should be deployed in Hebron, but of first carrying out an evacuation of settlers from Hebron."

He said that if the 450 Jewish settlers remained in the town, the presence of Palestinian police or foreign observers "will change nothing and the population will continue to live under the threat of a new massacre."

After the February 25 massacre the PLO called for an armed international protection force to be deployed in the territories, the disarming of Jewish settlers and dismantling of certain flashpoint settlements.

In Cairo, chief PLO negotiator Nabil Sha'th said the two sides had drawn up a draft accord on the deployment of international observers and a Palestinian police force for Hebron.

But he did not confirm the autonomy talks would resume, saying only that the negotiators would meet again in the Egyptian capital on Tuesday for further talks on security for the Palestinians of the West Bank town.

"There are certain points to clear up," Sha'th cautioned.

Israeli negotiators agreed on Thursday after two days of talks to the deployment of armed Norwegian observers in Hebron.

Marwan Kanafani, a close aide to PLO chairman Yasir 'Arafat, said in Tunis that the PLO was keeping in contact with all parties involved, including the United States, Russia and Norway, to obtain answers to the PLO's demands following the massacre.

Norway brokered the PLO-Israeli autonomy accord signed in Washington last September, according to which Israeli troops were due to start pulling out of the occupied Gaza Strip and Jericho on December 13.

Implementation of the deal has been set back by the Hebron massacre and disagreements over security issues.

The occupied Gaza Strip and West Bank were paralysed by a general strike Friday to mark the first month since the massacre.

Meanwhile, a Palestinian truck driver from Hebron died after being shot by a Jewish settler near Beit Jibrin in southern Israel, police announced.

The 42-year-old gunman fired shots from a car at the truck and then fled the scene, but he was later arrested by police in the southern Israeli town of Kyriat Gat.

Sha'th, 'Arafat Aide Comment on Negotiations

NC2503161294 Paris AFP in English 1506 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Text] Tunis, March 25 (AFP)—The PLO has not yet decided whether to resume negotiations with Israel on

launching Palestinian self-rule, a close aide to PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat said here Friday [25 March].

Marwan Kanafani said PLO-Israeli discussions set to resume in Cairo next week "do not constitute a resumption of the negotiations."

Earlier an aide to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin told AFP the negotiations on autonomy in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho would resume in Cairo Tuesday, exactly one month after the talks were suspended over the Hebron massacre.

Kanafani said the PLO was continuing its contacts with all concerned parties, including the United States, Russia and Norway, to obtain answers to demands made by the PLO in the wake of the Hebron massacre.

A resumption of the autonomy talks "depends on positive and practical answers which the Israelis must provide," concerning implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 904, which allowed for protection of Palestinians in the occupied territories.

After the massacre the PLO called for an armed international protection force to be deployed in the territories, the disarming of Jewish settlers and dismantling of certain flashpoint settlements.

The Israeli official, declining to be named, said negotiators General Amnon Shahak and the director general of the foreign ministry, Uri Savir, had reported to Rabin on "the progress made in the Egyptian capital."

"We will go back to Cairo on Tuesday and this time we will be able to conclude," Shahak, the deputy chief-of-staff, said on his return after two days of talks on boosting security for the Palestinians of Hebron.

The PLO broke off the autonomy talks after a Jewish settler massacred 30 Palestinian worshippers in a mosque of the West Bank town of Hebron on February 25.

In Cairo, chief PLO negotiator Nabil Sha'th said the two sides had drawn up a draft accord on the deployment of international observers and a Palestinian police force for Hebron.

But he did not confirm the autonomy talks would resume, saying only that the negotiators would meet again in the Egyptian capital on Tuesday for further talks on security for Hebron.

Sha'th said the draft accord would be submitted to PLO and Israeli leaders. "Important progress was achieved during negotiations in the last two days in Cairo but there are certain points to clear up," he cautioned.

Israeli radio said that if the security measures for Hebron were finalized early next week, the negotiations to launch autonomy in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho would resume "immediately."

'Arafat Aide on Importance of 13 Apr Implementation

TA2803122194 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0805 GMT 28 Mar 94

[Telephone interview with Jibril al-Rajub, 'Arafat's adviser on the territories, in Tunis, by Rafi Rosenfeld—live]

[Text] [Rosenfeld] There has been great optimism in Israel in the past few days in anticipation of the resumption of the Israel-PLO negotiations. Does your organization in Tunis share this sentiment?

[Al-Rajub] I think it does. Agreement still has to be reached on the number of policemen and their weapons, and we expect this issue to be resolved tomorrow.

[Rosenfeld] Israel does not think the number of policemen and their weapons are a big problem. Do you share this view?

[Al-Rajub] We do see this as a problem, but if Israel thinks it is no problem, then it can be solved within the next 24 hours.

[Rosenfeld] How many Palestinian policemen does the PLO want in Hebron?

[Al-Rajub] Listen, we too do not insist on any particular number. So, if the Israelis think this is no problem, we will be able to find some compromise.

[Rosenfeld] It has been said here that a deal can be clinched within a few hours.

[Al-Rajub] I hope so. If it is wrapped up today, we will start the Gaza and Jericho negotiations tomorrow.

[Rosenfeld] With regard to the Gaza and Jericho negotiations, there is no certainty that all the problems will be solved by 13 April—the date on which the first part of the agreement is supposed to be implemented. Will the PLO insist on this date?

[Al-Rajub] Listen, I think we cannot solve all the problems by 13 April, and even in a year and in two years, there will still be difficulties to be overcome. But if we can enter on 13 April, it will help both sides to overcome the difficulties.

[Rosenfeld] Then you insist that at least Palestinian policemen enter the territory on 13 April, or that the State of Israel make at least a symbolic step on that date.

[Al-Rajub] Yes, Israel must make the fist step. In my opinion, Israel must make many steps before 13 April.

[Rosenfeld] Such as?

[Al-Rajub] First of all, the introduction of policemen. Second, the release of prisoners. Third, Israel must start bringing deportees back home. I think there are many steps that need to be taken.

[Rosenfeld] The big question is naturally the Army's withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho. Judging by this morning's press reports, there is no certainty that all the difficulties will be ironed out and an agreement will be signed by 13 April. What will happen if no agreement is signed by then?

[Al-Rajub] The failure to sign an agreement for this day is unfortunate, but if we start before 13 April, a positive atmosphere will be created and there will be a favorable attitude for the peace process and the leaders on both sides, helping them overcome the difficulties and sign an agreement within a short time.

[Rosenfeld] Jibril al-Rajub in Tunis, thank you very much.

[Al-Rajub] You are welcome. Shalom.

Official on Talks, Observers, Police Force

JN2603082994 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 26 Mar 94 p 1, 14

[By Lamis K. Andoni]

[Text] Israel has agreed to the deployment of a lightly armed 50-man Norwegian observer unit and an equal number of a Palestinian police force in the city of Hebron but the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) is seeking to expand the unit to two multi-national battalions including senior Egyptian officers.

Israel will respond to the Palestinian proposals when the talks, which were adjourned in Cairo yesterday, resume after the two delegations deliberate with their two respective leaderships.

The PLO is also awaiting a response to the deployment of a 8,000-9,000 Palestinian police force in Jericho and the Gaza Strip.

PLO officials in Tunis expected the Palestinian force to cross from Jordan and Egypt by April 13, the agreed upon date for Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

Israel has suggested speeding up the withdrawal in return for resumption of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, but the PLO wanted to get security guarantees that will end the curfew in Hebron before going back to the negotiating table.

"The way things are moving the actual beginning of the implementation will be delayed for two or three weeks, but we cannot resume negotiations without seeing real change in the situation on the ground especially in Hebron," a PLO official said.

According to Tunis-based PLO officials, Israel has not officially conceded to demands to evict 450 Israeli settlers from the centre of Hebron.

"The Israelis could not give a word or any promises regarding the settlers," said one PLO official.

The Israelis have implied, however, that the government was considering specific measures. PLO officials said that the Israeli negotiators refused to elaborate.

Israel, the officials said, will be studying a suggestion, initially put forward by Norway, that it take unilateral measures without prior public announcements, but the PLO prefers that a third party, most probably Norway, will act as a guarantor to ensure follow-up of whatever process the Israeli government decides to start regarding the settlers.

Meanwhile, PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat, who has personally insisted on the participation of senior Egyptian officers in the foreign observing force, is satisfied with Israel's acceptance of the principle of foreign observers but he wanted to make sure that it will be a prelude to international protection for Palestinians across the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The officials said that Israel had stipulated that light arms will be confined to pistols only—something that seems to satisfy the PLO leadership's demands at this point.

But what PLO leaders seem to fear the most is for Israel to use the siege on Hebron as bargaining chip to pressure Hebronites and the Palestinians to drop other demands concerning the settlers and the settlements.

Critics of Mr. 'Arafat argue that he has not held out long enough to make Israel budge, and that if he does not take a firm stand, lifting the curfew on Hebron will be used by Israel to extract Palestinian concessions.

Furthermore, the 20-hour siege of Hebron last week, when the Israeli army blasted a hideout for Hamas members and destroyed or damaged neighbouring houses in the process, has presented the PLO with a challenge of how secure protection of Palestinians against Israel army clampdowns.

A United Nations Security Council resolution passed two weeks ago, reaffirmed the applicability of the Forth Geneva Convention, that practically bans an occupying power from conducting such clampdowns on people under occupation, on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, including East Jerusalem.

It was unclear so far, based on contacts with PLO officials in Tunis, whether that tentatively agreed upon deployment of foreign observers will be authorised to prevent Israeli violations of the Geneva convention.

Sources Identify 'Points of Understanding'

PM2503165494 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 25 Mar 94 p3

[Unattributed report: "Four Points of Understanding Between the PLO and Israel"]

[Text] Amman, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—Reliable sources say that Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat still

has not given his final approval for the resumption of negotiations with Israel. The sources identified the points so far agreed with the Israeli side as follows:

1. Presence of international forces in Hebron, as a unit including international observers from Norway.

2. Formation of a Palestinian police unit for deployment in Hebron. It will have a joint Israeli-Palestinian command and is expected to consist of several hundred members.

3. Joint patrols of Israelis, Palestinians, and foreign observers to be formed.

4. Seven days after the final agreement between the two delegations to the negotiations, a Palestinian armed police force to enter the West Bank and assume its task of maintaining security.

5. The "caravans" quarter in the Jericho area to be vacated and the Jews evacuated from central Hebron three months later, to be assembled elsewhere, perhaps in the settlement of Qiryat Arba'.

6. All deportees to be allowed to return to Jericho.

7. The PLO leadership to enter Jericho one month after the establishment of a Palestinian police headquarters. A vanguard force may be allowed in before that to pave the way for the arrival of the leadership.

The sources say that 'Arafat still has not given his final approval and linked the resumption of the negotiations to the implementation of practical measures, and that there is still some disagreement on details such as the size and powers of the international force. 'Arafat has rejected the idea of international observers along the lines of the International Red Cross and the Relief Agency. There is still some disagreement regarding the status and armament of the Palestinian police force in Hebron and regarding the evacuation of settlers from the area of the holy al-Ibrahimi mosque.

According to sources close to the Palestinian president, the main issue which still worries 'Arafat and which has been the subject of Arab and international contacts is the PLO's deteriorating image in Palestinian circles after the Hebron massacre. That is why he has sought support for moves to compel Israel to make concessions on matters relating to the living conditions of the people of the occupied territory, to make them feel that there has indeed been some change.

Meanwhile, an official spokesman for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP], led by Dr. George Habash, has stated that the second Hebron massacre which was committed the day before yesterday—in which five people were martyred, a large number were wounded, and over 10 houses demolished—confirmed that Security Council Resolution 904 did nothing for the Palestinian people and only offered a way out for the resumption of the negotiations. The spokesman called for an immediate halt to the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, effective international protection for the Palestinian people, and efforts to dismantle the settlements which, he said, are "a time bomb set to explode at any moment." The Palestinian official spokesman said that it is the duty of the world and of the Security Council to protect the Palestinian people, implement the UN resolutions, and deter the occupation's policy of daily massacres, destruction, and murder. The Palestinian spokesman held Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat and his clique largely responsible for what is going on in the occupied territory and urged him to resign. He added: The patriotic forces will continue their struggle by all political and military means and will escalate the intifadah until the downfall of the "Oslo-Cairo agreement."

PLO Envoy in Cyprus Views Talks With Israel

NC2703122894 Nicosia ALITHIA in Greek 27 Mar 94 p 13

[Interview with Samir Abu-Ghazalah, head of PLO diplomatic mission in Cyprus, by Rena Koulermou-Larkou—place and date not given]

[Excerpts] [Koulermou-Larkou] Mr. Samir, it appears from your biographical note that you have experienced up close the contemporary history of the Palestinian people, you have not been a mere spectator. How do you feel now that the talks are being held to achieve peace in the region?

[Abu-Ghazalah] We Palestinians are by nature optimistic people, despite that fact that we have suffered massacres, terrible difficulties and all sorts of terrorism—from expulsion and the refugees in exile, the bombings of our refugee settlements with every sort of bomb including even napalm, to the recent massacre in Hebron. [passage omitted]

We want peace in the Middle East, we want our children to grow and live under conditions of peace. We want to see the flag of Palestine fly over our land, we want to see our world use Palestinian passports and identity cards.

We are a people with history and culture. We have contributed to the civilization of the whole region and it is our right to exist.

We went to Madrid believing in peace and we continued the peace process of talks without actually having seen any positive step by the other side. We even lose credibility in the eyes of our own people because we continue to negotiate under such conditions.

Even after the recent massacre in Hebron we are ready to continue the negotiations. In spite of this, the other side does not make a positive gesture. For instance, take the question of Jericho. We actually talk about the granting of an area of 360 square kilometers and we are negotiating persistently only for a part of 67 square kilometers. [passage omitted]

[Koulermou-Larkou] Mr. Samir, when you referred to your people's struggle you said that the Palestinians suffered from every sort of terrorism. However, for many years in the West at least those who were identified with terrorism were the Palestinians. Today, do you believe that it is the Palestinians who have changed the way in which they struggle or is it the way the world and the mass media view you that has changed?

[Abu-Ghazalah] First of all, the Palestinians have not changed. It is our right, as it is also the right of every people struggling for their land, to resist and defend our people's basic human rights.

We have been deprived even of the right to call ourselves Palestinians. Unfortunately, too, things are presented exactly the opposite of what they really are. The conqueror who uses every kind of attack is not called a terrorist but the one who is in defense is regarded as a terrorist.

However, sincerely, we do not demand that everyone be tagged this or that. We are the victims in this problem and despite all this we are committed to the goal of achieving peace in the area and to the peace process.

[Koulermou-Larkou] What are your personal concerns?

[Abu-Ghazalah] The settlers and their settlements. There was a commitment made in Madrid that the talks be based on UN Security Council Resolution 242. This means that all the Israeli troops and the settlers who were established in the area after 1967 must withdraw.

My view is that the settlements and the settlers are time bombs and they certainly constitute an obstacle to the peace negotiations.

I do not believe that there can be a solution as long as the settlements and settlers remain. The settlers are armed and attack simple civilians, even passers-by and, as you have seen, they even attack places of worship. Moreover, the Israeli Investigatory Committee on the Hebron massacre yesterday heard complaints from the Palestinians who described how they are provoked daily by the settlers, even before the recent massacre.

[Koulermou-Larkou] In other words, the settlers are more aggressive against the Palestinians; why do you think so?

[Abu-Ghazalah] Certainly they are more aggressive. I will give you a very recent example. One week ago during a demonstration, the children of settlers were shouting slogans for the massacre of every Arab or Palestinian. [passage omitted]

[Koulermou-Larkou] You said earlier that the other side has not made even a single positive step in the negotiations process. What, in you opinion, would be a positive step?

[Abu-Ghazalah] There are many questions on which the other side could show understanding, such as the question of the settlers and settlements, the Jericho area, and many other questions that are pending on the agenda of negotiations. However, now it is like going around in circles without making progress. The other side promises that it will make a concession and then it reneges.

Unfortunately, many Palestinians are still detained in Israeli prisons, there is still intimidation and oppression of our people. Of course, the issue of Syria and Lebanon, where there are also occupied lands, is still pending. Agreements should also be made with these countries and this is envisaged in UN Security Council Resolution 242.

We hope that with the recent involvement of the Americans in the negotiations we will have some tangible results.

[Koulermou-Larkou] What you just said offers me the opportunity to ask two questions. Since we here in Cyprus also seems to pin many hopes on the active involvement of the Americans, do you think that the Palestinian and Cyprus issues are similar problems? Also, concerning the Americans, do you get the impression that today's sole superpower has changed its policy toward long- standing problems such as the Palestinian and the Cyprus problems?

[Abu-Ghazalah] Concerning your first question, yes, I believe that there are similarities in the Palestinian and Cyprus issue. However, there are also big differences with regard to the refugee aspect and the life in exile. You did not have generations born in refugee settlements nor have you been forced to live in exile.

However, what is necessary in both of these problems is the implementation of the UN resolutions on the Cyprus and the Palestinian issues.

Now, concerning your second question about the involvement of Americans in long-standing problems, I agree that this is a new U.S. policy toward such problems and what appears as a crusade to resolve all these problems gives the message that the United States is trying to achieve peace in the whole Middle East region. Besides, this would be to the benefit of the Middle East people as well as to the benefit of the Americans themselves. Think of the big economic and geopolitical interests that are at stake in the Middle East. [passage omitted]

[Koulermou-Larkou] Are you disturbed by the fact that Cyprus has recently opened an embassy in Israel?

[Abu-Ghazalah] This is an internal affair of Cyprus. We respect the view and decision of the Cyprus Government and people, provided, of course, that the embassy will not be in Jerusalem.

Official Views 'Confusion' on Jerusalem Issue

LD2603183294 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Statement by "official Palestinian spokesman;" place and date not given]

[Excerpts] Once again some Arab brothers have tried to cause confusion regarding the issue of Jerusalem during UN Security Council debates on Resolution 904. This resolution was adopted to condemn the massacre in the sacred al-Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron, and to take important measures, for the first time, on this significant international level. Especially important is the comprehensive aspect of this resolution, which is binding on all members of the international community. In relation to holy Jerusalem, the resolution deals with it as an integral part of the Palestinian territories that have been occupied since June 1967.

The clarification supplied by the U.S. Government on the paragraph concerned prompted the Islamic and Arab groups to begin activities in New York and Washington to immediately take up the issue with the U.S. Administration. The administration has recently clarified its position, and despite feverish attempts by the Jewish lobby in the United States, the final status of Jerusalem will be discussed within a period not exceeding two years from this date.

Holy Jerusalem is the capital of the state of Palestine; therefore, we stress our total belief in our right, religion, and holy Koran [passage omitted]. Jerusalem is an integral part of Palestinian national sovereignty; God Almighty has honored us by making us its loyal guardians; we defend it with our lives and with the cascades of blood that have not ceased to flow for one single minute along the path of the Palestinian and Arab holy war to defend the two holy places—sacred places of Prophet Muhammad, God's peace and prayers be upon him, and Jesus Christ, God's peace upon him.

Stemming from this principle, we will not accept any Israeli or non-Israeli control over Jerusalem, because it is the capital of our independent state of Palestine. [passage omitted].

U.S. Ambiguity on Status of Jerusalem Criticized

LD2503193094 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Text] Brothers, what does this continuing U.S. mention of the issue of Jerusalem mean? What is the objective behind it? The first mention, which went against the grain of the ordinary U.S. policy, was uttered weeks ago when the al-Ibrahim mosque massacre occurred, in which Israeli occupiers and settlers killed 53 Palestinians and wounded more than 180 others. This U.S. statement was made before the UN Security Council. At the time it was very clear that nobody could condone the massacre or even oppose its condemnation; this is because the ugliness and magnitude of the massacre and its racial motivations exposed the Israeli hypocrisy, which has been killing Palestinians for years and decades in a terrorist, racist, merciless, and harsh manner in the occupied land and world capitals; yet the Israelis continued to avoid world condemnation. What is more, the Israeli hypocrisy used to accuse the Palestinians of terrorism.

In the midst of the Israeli official, terrorist, and occupationist killing, the United States opposed UN Security Council Resolution 904 for three weeks, thus defying the international community. It insisted on voting on each separate paragraph of the resolution in order that it could abstain from voting on an issue that is the most clear-cut of issues—it is the issue of east Jerusalem, which the resolution stipulates must be included in the list of occupied territories. This stipulation is harmonious with reality and with all past UN resolutions. It is also compatible with the measures that the superpowers and other countries, including the United States, have respected to the letter; they have all refrained from opening an embassy in Jerusalem. This was done to avoid giving the Israelis the interpretation they have been working for since their occupation of the Palestinian land—to give Jerusalem the status of the united and permanent capital of Israel.

The issue could have passed if the matter had stopped at the U.S. abstention, and after the clarification issued by the White House, stressing no change in U.S. policy toward Jerusalem.

But what happened the day before yesterday—after the U.S. President met the Jewish communities and after Jewish leaders stated that Clinton had pointed out that Jerusalem is an undivided city and Israel's eternal capital—sets off the problem from anew.

It is true that U.S. State Department spokesman Mike McCurry yesterday stressed that there are no changes in the U.S. position on Jerusalem, but that statement was general, open-ended, and insufficient. It does not resolve the situation on a fundamental issue for our Palestinian people, the Arab, Islamic, and Christian nations.

When we put two and two together, we realize what is behind these statements, and this raises our anxiety on such U.S. discrepancies and ambiguities over Jerusalem. On the one hand, the Administration does not agree on a paragraph which does not state Jerusalem's occupation, and on the other they leave the U.S. President's office to announce what he had told them was his position—on Jerusalem being Israel's unified capital. On another occasion, the official spokesman for the State Department, and not for the White House, speaks ambiguously and in general terms that there is no change in the American position on the issue of Jerusalem, without specifying the position and without redefining that position.

Some have criticized the PLO because it forced the city of Jerusalem into the UN resolution. This led to the U.S. abstaining from the vote.

Notwithstanding our willingness to accept all critics, we still think that blind persistence and/or hiding one's head in the sand will not help anyone. On the contrary, it will make things worse.

The American stance and policies are not merely reaction. On the contrary, there are acts and policies which are well planned in advance, as well as tactical pledges. It is therefore necessary to raise them in order find out exactly what they are leading to, to know how to deal with them, and which weapons one should use.

We believe that the current American Administration is under greater pressures from the Jewish lobby in the United States—which might be behind the Whitewater issue which has become a powder keg that might destroy this Administration—when dealing with the Palestinian problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is therefore a problem which has made matters more difficult and more complicated, and has made it necessary to face up to the problems, however complicated they might be, foremost of which is Jerusalem. Jerusalem should be viewed as an occupied city and a holy city, not only to Muslims but also to Christians, whose right to their holy city has been questioned by President Clinton, who has chosen ambiguity as a means for fulfilling the Jewish illegitimate aims.

It is true that Jerusalem is on the table of negotiations within the agreed timetable of the negotiations. However, such an admission should not change the fact that it is an occupied city, and that negotiations will not be about whether it is an occupied city or not but on its future, in a such a way that would bring about balance and fairness, and meet the rights of all parties concerned.

Jerusalem cannot be eternally united as the Israelis have been asserting, because the word eternal is a gratuitous one. Nothing is eternal as far as history is concerned.

Algeria

Foreign Ministry Official Assassinated

LD2803104194 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1000 GMT 28 Mar 94

[Text] Security authorities have announced that Touati Belkacem, deputy director of the African section at the Foreign Ministry, was assassinated this morning in front of his home near Bordj El Kifan in the suburbs of the capital. The victim was attacked by three men armed with automatic pistols as he was preparing to leave his house. The same source added that his wife was wounded.

Interior Minister Comments on Current Issues

Views Measures To Prevent Sabotage

LD2703020494 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2200 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Text] In Constantine today, Salim Saadi, minister of interior and local authorities, presided over the proceedings of a regional meeting which brought together, alongside the ministerial delegation, 15 governors of eastern Algeria and a number of local officials representing various social and professional sectors. During this meeting, which was held in the Mohamed Laid al-Khalifa Cultural Center, the interior minister delivered an address devoted to security issues and the means and facilities the state has made available and continues to provide in order to eliminate the phenomenon of armed violence aimed at the citizens, security men, and state institutions. Abdelwahab Zeid, from the Constantine radio station, gives us the most important points of the interior minister's address:

[Zeid] Mr. Saadi stressed the fresh measures taken at all levels and designed to ensure that we stand as one, facing up with determination and firmness to all maneuvers aimed at Algeria, its people, and its government. He underlined the need for citizens to mobilize, each in his own position, to defend the gains of the liberation revolution [of 1954] and the state institutions which belong to the people, and the future of its sons and coming generations.

[Begin Saadi recording] From the experiences of the last year or two in fighting this disaster we have drawn lessons on the need to review the fight against this phenomenon, either by way of renewing our methods of fighting or changing our ways of using these methods. Such a review makes us aware that we will be entering a new era of mobilizing more material and human resources and improving the methods of our fight to make them more effective. We have started this process, and you are going to see it on the ground in the future. However, the problems of security and the fight against terrorism should not remain solely the task of the security men. The security men are now in the service of the people, and the people should therefore increase their participation in helping the security men.

We know that there are conditions that must be available, for example, (?legal) conditions. We are going to make these conditions available, because we are going to ensure the presence of the minimum necessary force in every municipality, everywhere, to secure a general cover [applause interrupting].

Let us now speak about another subject, through which we are going to give our reply to those in charge of public enterprises. We have taken measures to ensure that these enterprises, which belong to the people, are protected by their own workers. This means people will be appointed to assume this task. If we are sometimes unable to find people with the necessary qualities from within the enterprises, then people will be recruited from outside the enterprise to provide the necessary protection for the enterprise and its assets. But we cannot leave these enterprises open to sabotage. [end recording]

No Elections Until Violence Ends

LD2703125394 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Excerpt] Mr. Salim Saadi, minister of interior and local authorities, emphasized yesterday in Constantine that the state had mobilized resources for putting an end to the phenomenon of armed violence against citizens, security men, and state institutions.

While chairing a regional meeting, which included 15 governors and a number of local officials, he said that there would be no return to the course of elections as long as absolute security and the final elimination of sabotage had not been established. [passage omitted]

Newspaper To Protest Attacks on Press

LD2603090594 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 0600 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Excerpt] Most of the publicly-owned and independent newspapers cease publication today and tomorrow. This decision was made directly by the publishers following the armed attack on the premises of the L'HEBDO LIBERE weekly last Monday.

The attack led to the killing of a cameraman and one worker and the serious wounding of three other. The weekly's sources had said that one of the wounded, Nadir Mahmoudi, brother of the L'HEBDO LIBERE's director, died of his wounds. The papers involved are EL WATAN, EL MOUDJAHID, El HAQ, LA GAZETTE, CONFIDENCE, OLYMPIQUE, ALGER REPUBLICAIN, L'ECHO DU CENTRE and other newspapers.

This is the first time national newspapers are to cease publication for two consecutive days in protest against repeated armed attacks on journalists and media men.

The security issue, which is an aspect of the political crisis the country has experienced for over two years, is a source of concern for the government. The series of negotiations President Liamine Zeroual has been holding is expected to resume this week in the framework of the dialogue he had started since the beginning of last week aimed at seeking the best means to overcome the current crisis the country is experiencing. [passage omitted]

Egypt

Rabin Telephones Mubarak on Peace Process

NC2503190494 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1850 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 25 Mar (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak this evening received a telephone call from Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin.

The discussion during the telephone conversation focussed on the current developments in events and efforts to overcome obstacles facing the Middle East peace process.

Doctors: 3 Types of Bullets Used at Hebron

NC2703130394 Paris AFP in English 1238 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, March 27 (AFP)—Egyptian doctors said Sunday the victims of the Hebron mosque massacre were hit by three types of bullets proving Jewish settler Baruch Goldstein had not acted alone.

The team of doctors, who visited Hebron shortly after last month's massacre, told the Egyptian daily AL-AHRAM "three types of bullets and splinters were extracted" from the bodies of the wounded.

"That proves the massacre was not carried out by one person," they told the paper.

The Israeli army has insisted Goldstein acted alone when he opened fire on February 25 in the mosque killing 30 Arab worshippers.

Israeli ballistics experts have said that all those wounded and killed were hit by bullets from a Galil short-barrelled gun.

But witnesses at the official inquiry into the massacre have testified that they saw another armed settler with Goldstein, and that two soldiers also fired at people and not just in the air as the army has maintained.

One 12-year-old boy told the inquiry that copper splinters were taken from his back, lending weight to claims that a grenade was used.

A separate PLO inquiry recently concluded that at least two soldiers had shot at Moslems at prayer in the West Bank mosque.

The official Israeli inquiry is still hearing evidence.

Islamic Jihad Cofounder Discusses New Ideas

NC2503091094 Cairo AL-'ARABI in Arabic 21 Mar 94 p 6

[Interview with Hasan al-Hillawi by Khalid Salah in Turah Prison in Cairo; date not given—first paragraph is AL-'ARABI introduction]

[Text] Al-Hillawi is one of the founders of the so-called Islamic Jihad Movement. He joined the Nabil Bura'i-led organization in 1967. Ayman al-Zawahiri was also one of the group's cadres. Al-Hillawi was the fourth defendant in the case known as the Technical Military Academy case in 1974 but he was acquitted. He then participated in establishing an organization that attacked a foreign consulate in Alexandria in 1977. Al-Hillawi was sentenced to seven years. But he escaped and spent 16 years abroad. It was reported then that he was one of the major financiers of terrorist operations in Egypt. He was arrested by the Saudi intelligence service in May and is now a guest of the Turah Prison. We met him there. He said he had renounced terrorism. He declared his new ideas renouncing terrorism and refuting the ideas of those who kill innocent men, women, and children.

[Salah] What are the motives behind your statements condemning terrorism and lashing out at the group of which you were a principal founder?

[Al-Hillawi] My main motive was that I wanted to defend the true image of Islam. The current actions of these groups, which they attribute to Islam, distort the image of Islam and the Muslims. It is one of my religious duties—I am a graduate of the al-Azhar University—to tell the truth and show that these actions are not linked with the pure religion, Islam.

These groups, which carry out acts of violence, should not be attributed to Islam. True, we called on people in the past to abide by and defend religion but we never asked them to form organizations or jihad. At first, we called for jihad in defense of Egypt, not to spread corruption in it. Religion demands that we carry out jihad to promote the country and defend sanctities. Jihad is not sowing discords or shedding blood unjustly. That is sedition. How could I kill Muslims or even non-Muslims who are defenseless and who are not our enemies? How could I kill them and still call it jihad? That is a crime.

[Salah] Is it not strange for you to say this when you were one of the founders of this movement and the principal financier when you were abroad?

[Al-Hillawi] I took part in founding the movement that called for real jihad, not for shedding blood falsely. How could we approach the people now with their hearts imbued with indignation after satan sowed sedition and used some groups affiliated with Islam? How could we face the people now that every bearded person and every

veiled person reflects the image of a treacherous killer? As for the talk about me financing these groups, this is wrong. It has never taken place.

[Salah] But what made you stay quiet all these years? What made you declare these new ideas after your arrest? Were you subjected to specific pressures, for example?

[Al-Hillawi] I was not silent. But travel enabled me to survey the situation carefully. I wrote a book in which I refuted their ideas. I recorded this opinion and several sermons made in Saudi Arabia on tape. I swear that my writings and announcements were not shaped under pressure. I also swear that I offered nothing in return for my release from prison. All my ideas have been prompted by what I have seen of ugly actions, which they attribute to Islam falsely. I know they say I have become weak and sick. But this is not true. It is only the horror that is inflicted on every preacher and ourselves by the shedding of the blood of Muslims or non-Muslims. God forbids such actions.

[Salah] In your view, what has led these groups to all this violence and terrorism?

[Al-Hillawi] They have never consulted the ulema but followed their own deficient interpretations until they reached the current state of confusion. Had they gone back to the scholars and those who issue religious decrees in Egypt, they would not have reached this state.

They sought their own interpretations although they are not qualified to do so and cited legal religious texts in the wrong situations. For example, they kill innocent people with their explosions and assassinations and then say they did not mean to kill them. If we ask them what these people did to be killed, they would reply that they were killed by mistake and that the killers will be made to answer and judged by God according to their intentions. Take the verse: "If any do fail to judge by (the light of) what God hath revealed, they are (no better than) wrongdoers" [Koranic verse]. This is the verse on which they establish most of their ideas and deeds. They became so general in their interpretation that they thought simply that they are the Muslims and the rest are infidels. This is wrong because the correct interpretation of the verse is that any one who does not accept God's rule, thinks there is a better rule, and says so is an infidel. But even the rulers of Egypt and Arab and Islamic countries do not say this. Everyone, including the rulers, knows that Islamic shari'ah is the greatest and most revered thing. They always declare this but believe that there are circumstances that impede its implementation to the full. Such circumstances may be acceptable to some and not to others and this is something that should be interpreted, because it is a contentious issue and no judgment can be passed on it in this unjust manner.

[Salah] They do not only level charges against the rulers but also describe the entire state as ignorant.

[Al-Hillawi] This is an erroneous statement because Imam al-Shafi'i [late Muslim scholar] said every country conquered by Muslims will remain an Islamic state until doomsday. How can this be said today? All the Arab countries are Islamic and the people in them are Muslims and non-Muslims, as is the case in every society where there is good and bad. Even these societies include the reformer and the corrupt and the believer and the hypocrite. Everyone is judged by his deeds. Egyptian society in particular is an Islamic one and no one can say it is not.

[Salah] Do you have an alternative to the call for change under these circumstances?

[Al-Hillawi] I have no Islamic line except to follow the ulema and listen to them. Talk of senior ulema must be heeded. As for gathering around youths who have imperfect culture and think they truly understand religion, any act they commit is imperfect and closer to ignorance. All Muslims must follow the renowned ulema who are known for their knowledge and piety.

[Salah] Do you think the groups that practice violence in Egypt are financed by foreign states?

[Al-Hillawi] God knows. Some quarters may want to harm popular activity in Egypt. I wonder from where those groups brought the money and weapons. Undoubtedly, some individuals or groups have an interest in spoiling our affairs. I believe there are many sources of finance but I have no details.

[Salah] Are there people in the movement who have begun to accept the ideas and joined your call?

[Al-Hillawi] Yes, thank God. There are hundreds, including 'Abd-al-Nasir Durrah, who was one of the suspects in al-Jihad incidents in 1981 and who was sentenced to five years in prison. The number is increasing daily. Hundreds of members abroad are convinced. But there is a need to spread the call and expand the new understanding. Those people felt they were breaking free of wrong conceots and realizing that right is different from what they thought. Many young men who effectively understood the truth have begun to explain things to others and to call them to the right path. If we are given a better chance, these groups' problems will be solved, God willing.

[Salah] What is your comment on recent political assassinations and attacks against tourism committed upon orders from leaders abroad?

[Al-Hillawi] Like the Islamic ulema, I see in them a kind of corruption on earth; they are religiously unacceptable. Not one religious scholar condones this corruption. It is against the shari'ah and a product of inept, misleading minds. I think those movements were good at first. But I ask them now: Are you emulating any model from our virtuous early Muslims? I challenge them to say yes.

[Salah] You said the ulema have a role to play in expanding the understanding of religion but those groups

do not recognize the ulema; they refuse to listen to them and they describe them as government ulema.

[Al-Hillawi] Their talk of government ulema is wrong and misleading. Egypt is full of honest and virtuous ulema. If they do not listen to the advice of the ulema, they will continue to listen to the ignorant and their sedition will continue. Of course, there is a problem here, because they view themselves as mujahidin, and their dead as martyrs. They consider their displacement a kind of a patience along the road of jihad. This is a real problem. It is our duty to be patient with them and to lead them to the right path.

[Salah] How?

[Al-Hillawi] What is happening in Egypt is a kind of sedition among Muslims; there must be a conciliation and a truce. There must be room for dialogue and the ulema must have the chance to explain what is right and to calmly let those people know that they are far removed from God's shari'ah. If they still reject this explanation, this understanding, and this willingness for reform, then they must be confronted with all the methods they deserve! We discuss the issue from a religious point of view; we discuss religious texts and how they should be understood. If they answer in a political or an argumentative manner, then their arguments are unacceptable. I knew that some of them, such as Ayman al-Zawahiri, wanted to respond to my statements. Al-Zawahiri is a man of medicine, a surgeon who is not specialized in religious texts; let him talk about medicine, not religion. If he mixes medical surgery with religious texts, the bleeding will be endless. I tell al-Zawahiri: Fear God. Enough corruption on earth.

[Salah] Aren't you afraid of an attempted assassination in the context of their desire to continue the violence under the slogan of "preserving the propagation?"

[Al-Hillawi] They know I say this out of love and concern for them. There is no hatred between us and I explain to them what is right and that what they are doing has benefited no one except the enemies of Islam and Egypt both inside the country and abroad.

By the way, I was subject to an assassination attempt at the hands of Shukri Mustafa, the founder of the Repudiation and Renunciation Group, inside jail 18 years ago. God saved me. I believe the devil might applaud them for this act but it will only bring them evil in this world and punishment in the next. I am not afraid of saying what is right. Almighty God says: "Ye who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin" [Koranic verse]

[Salah] Do you think the Kaliphate system applies now?

[Al-Hillawi] This is one of the shari'ah's duties and the way to this is as the ulema define. But the Muslim ulema did not speak about this clearly and we follow them. It is a duty, if possible, like pilgrimage. If it is not possible, God does not demand that anyone do what is beyond his capability.

Numerous groups advocated the reinstatement of the Kaliphate system and the call was right. But who gave them the mandate to set up such groups for this purpose? This is a violation of the rights of all Muslims and such a mandate cannot be used without consulting the authoritative people. Establishing groups to achieve this goal is impermissible, even the Muslim Shaykh Ibn-Taymiyah [former prominent Islamic scholar] did not call for setting up such groups. How do you compare such groups with the organizations of Ibn- Taymiyah, Imam al-Shafi'i, and Ahmad Bin-Hanbal [former Islamic scholars]? I reiterate to them: "Show me just one similarity with the deeds of the good ancestors." Where are the organizations of the prophet's companions, imams, and ancestors? These are ideas they grasped as they emulated other world organizations, while Islam does not advocate this at all.

[Salah] Do you intend to continue advocating these ideas after you leave prison?

[Al-Hillawi] I intend to continue until the young men know their rights and duties. I will flatter no one in this regard—be they senior officials, rash youths, or any others. Returning to what is right is better than pursuing ignorance and confusion and I implore God to guide these people to righteousness.

[Salah] Do you believe they still have the strength to continue?

[Al-Hillawi] I believe many of them will soon realize what is right and anyone who remains outside this genuine understanding will have no value or effect.

[Salah] How do your inmates who are members of these groups treat you in prison?

[Al-Hillawi] Thanks be to God, all those I have spoken to were convinced by the talk. I asked some factions to introduce their ulema and cadres so that they might be confronted but they were afraid of such confrontation and rejected debate and discussion.

[Salah] Do these factions include anyone you believe to be more right and closer to understanding?

[Al-Hillawi] These factions are many and all their differences and disputes resemble pre-Islamic contentions. They are personal and tribal. The best one is the one who decides to heed only the words of the ulema.

U.S. Urged To Clarify Stance on Jerusalem

NC2503155194 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 20 Mar 94 p 8

[The "Closeup" column by Salamah Ahmad Salamah: "A U.S. Explanation Is Required"]

[Text] Has the U.S. Government under President Bill Clinton's administration changed its position on Jerusalem without making a candid declaration and without the Arab governments discovering this? Can we be content with the statement by Timothy Wirth, the State Department adviser on population affairs [title as published], in which he said that the statement citing President Clinton on Jerusalem was distorted and that the U.S. stance has not changed. This stance means that the fate of Jerusalem must be negotiated. Why wasn't this statement or correction made by the White House or the U.S. State Department, which are the parties concerned with explaining stances relating to foreign issues?

The successive U.S. Administrations have adopted a clear position on the issue of Jerusalem, which, from the Arab point of view, is considered to be one of the most important issues triggering the Arab-Israeli conflict. This issue will remain a bone of contention unless a settlement is reached guaranteeing the Arab rights in this holy city and preserving freedoms for religions there without relinquishing the religious and political rights of its Arab and Muslim population.

In all the negotiations and talks since the signing of the Camp David Accords, the U.S. stance on the Jerusalem problem has remained firm: Jerusalem is part of the occupied territories. The disputing parties should settle things through negotiations. Accordingly, the American Embassy has remained in Tel Aviv and has not moved to Jerusalem. During the U.S. presidential election campaign, Bill Clinton made statements in which he pledged that Jerusalem would be the capital of Israel. The Arab world did not bother much about these statements and considered them to be electoral promises the value of which would end with the election result. But at his recent meeting with AIPAC's [American Israel Public Affairs Committee] senior figures, President Clinton seized the opportunity to emphasize that the United States considers united Jerusalem the capital of Israel, thus violating all previous U.S. stances.

Regrettably, President Clinton's statement has not aroused enough attention among the Arabs. No Islamic or Arab country requested an explanation or clarification of the new position, which followed the Hebron massacre and came when the peace efforts were stumbling. The only comment was made by Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, who declared that if this statement means a new U.S. policy toward Jerusalem, Egypt differs with it. The question now is: Has the United States changed its position on Jerusalem? Does the U.S. abstention from voting on the clause on Jerusalem in the UN Security Council resolution reflect a new stance? This is the required clarification.

Summit Urged To Discuss U.S. Stance on Jerusalem

NC2503151594 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 20 Mar 94 p 9

[Article by Ihsan Bakr: "Unconditional Return"]

[Excerpts] In an unprecedented challenge to the feelings of Arabs and Muslims, U.S. President Bill Clinton stood up to declare that the United States regards Jerusalem as the unified capital of the State of Israel. It appears that the United States is not content with its full bias toward Israel and with guaranteeing its military superiority over all the Arabs. Not content with impeding—for three weeks following the massacre in the al-Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron—a Security Council resolution condemning the massacre and providing protection for the Palestinian people, it wants to reward the killers by declaring that Jerusalem is Israel's capital.

Such a grave declaration attributed to the U.S. President is a precedent in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The official stance of every U.S. Administration—Republican or Democrat—as evidenced by documents has stipulated that the status of Jerusalem and its future can be decided only within the framework of negotiations between all the parties and as part of the final, comprehensive, and just settlement in the Middle East. This stance has been in force throughout recent years, since the establishment of the State of Israel.

Now, with a frankness that can only be envied, the U.S. President comes to declare his new stance that Jerusalem is the unified capital of Israel. He then pledged to impede any Security Council resolution condemning the al-Ibrahimi Mosque massacre if it included or even hinted that Jerusalem is part of the occupied Arab territories.

This U.S. stance was confirmed after Washington refused to agree to a clause in the Security Council resolution issued the day before yesterday pointing out that Jerusalem is an occupied Palestinian territory.

It appears that President Clinton, whose popularity has started to wane at a time when he is suffering from the "Whitewater" scandal in which he and his wife are accused of using their influence to profit and avoid paying taxes, wants to win over the Jewish pressure groups in the United States. So he has shown no regard for the feelings of Arabs and Muslims, not to mention their legitimate rights. And why not? The Arabs have been deprived of everything, even the ability to protest. And why not, when the peace efforts are stalling and have resulted in nothing more than retreats and concessions by the Arabs to Israel in return for endless U.S. rewards to Israel from the Arabs' pockets and at the Arabs' own expense? [passage omitted]

This U.S. stance on Israel and the massacre that the whole world condemned is not simply one of a complete defense of Israel, but also one of pressure on the Palestinian leadership to return to the Oslo Agreement and the negotiations and abandon any popular demand to amend the Oslo Agreement or propose new items on the agenda.

Warren Christopher told the Palestinian president quite clearly: Return to the negotiations unconditionally. He wants the Palestinians to surrender to Israel unconditionally.

It remains for us to say: Don't these changes in the U.S. stance require a call for an emergency Arab summit at the Arab League headquarters in Cairo to face a stance that not only affects the Palestinians, but also the entire Arab nation? If an Arab summit is not held now when the Arab-Israeli conflict is entering a critical stage, then when can such a summit be held? All the Arab regimes, not just the Palestinians, are responsible for halting the slide in the Arab stance.

U.S. Poll on Security Cited

NC2503123694 Cairo AL-'ARABI in Arabic 21 Mar 94 p 1

[Report by Hamadah Imam and Yasir Zari': "With Government Permission, Egypt's Security on the Table of the U.S. Intelligence Community"]

[Text] The result of an opinion poll on the prospects for security in Egypt in 1994 was sent to the Gallup Institute in Washington last week. The poll was conducted by "Radar Eastridge," a research and public relations firm, which secured a permit from the Central Agency for Mobilization and Statistics [CAMS]. The permit, numbered 1315/1993, was published in the Official Gazette on 6 December 1993.

The U.S. poll, conducted over three months, covered a sample of 8,000 citizens. The Egyptian and foreign researchers focused on poor neighborhoods, especially in al-Jizah and Asyut Governorates, in contravention of a CAMS decision stipulating that the survey be confined to a sample of 300 citizens in Cairo Governorate, distributed as follows: Some 230 from Heliopolis, al-Zaytun, al-Alf Maskan, Hada'iq al-Qubbah, al-Shurabiyah, al-Minyal, Madinat Nasr, Shubra, al-Dhahir, and al-'Abbasiyah and 70 citizens from al-Jizah Governorate, specifically from the areas of al-Muhandisin, al-Duqqi, Mit 'Uqbah, and the Pyramids.

The CAMS decision stressed that the citizens be told the survey is confidential and that data be gathered in accordance with an approved form prepared for this purpose. It also stipulated that only Egyptian researchers may gather the data and banned the participation of foreigners. The CAMS decision also stipulated that it receive two copies of the field study on completion before its handover to the quarter that commissioned it. CAMS would then hand the survey to that quarter.

Radar Eastridge did not abide by the CAMS conditions and did not secure the necessary permits from the security and administrative departments. It sent the poll result to Gallup to analyze it. Gallup is a private commercial firm selling its surveys to whoever pays the right price. Most of its contracts are with the CIA. The Gallup Institute recently conducted an opinion poll in Israel on the Jewish youth view and stance on the Gaza-Jericho Agreement.

AL-'ARABI has learned that a team of experts from Tel Aviv University's (Shilwah) Center is analyzing the results of another opinion poll conducted in the Governorates of Cairo, al-Jizah, and Alexandria. This poll was conducted by the Israeli Academic Center in Cairo and based on a sample of Egyptians, most notably intellectuals, politicians, and scientists. The poll focused on upcoming expected developments in light of the role of the political Islam current and the strength of the Nasirite current in Egypt.

In early January, the Israeli Academic Center received three researchers from the Truman Institute on Peace Research, which is affiliated with the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. This is within the framework of comprehensive research by a team of 30 researchers from the institute who will study the "impact of Islam on African policies." The Truman Institute's African Research Unit is planning to conduct a new study on the "radical Islamic current groups" and those that are most likely to reach power. The study will begin in June when a new team of researchers will arrive to conduct an opinion poll with the assistance of the Israeli Academic Center in Cairo, which has close links with the Israeli intelligence service Mosad.

CIA Accused of Spying on Officials' Phone Calls

Claims Detailed

NC2803133294 Cairo AL-AHALI in Arabic 23 Mar 94 p 1

[Report by Midhat al-Zahid: "An American Watergate in Egypt; the CIA Taps Senior Officials and Party Leaders' Telephone Communications"]

[Text] AL-AHALI has obtained information confirming that the American apparatuses used computer programs and phone tapping to spy on senior officials in state departments and on party leaders.

The American Reliance Company, which helped set up the unified telephone network in greater Cairo and Alexandria, established an information line between the Egyptian Telephone Exchange network and the central computer in the United States. The line could be used to tap the telephone communications of various ministries, parties, trade unions, and different subscribers.

In unifying the network, the American company Reliance depended on a central computer in which data concerning subscribers was stored on floppy disks connected with sets in every telephone exchange. These programs could be used to cut in on subscribers for testing and for other purposes, such as listening in.

The programs are started by a specific signal that could be sent from some distance from the United States using the information line between the Egyptian Telephone Exchange and the American central computer. With slight changes, signals could be received indicating that the line of the subscriber they want to tap is busy. Thus the telephone conversation can be taped.

The CIA tapped President Husni Mubarak's telephone calls during the Achille Lauro crisis, contrary to reports circulated at the time that bugs were planted in the president's office.

The devices were also used in taping Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat's telephone calls on the settlement talks. The recordings were used in an attempt to show that the Palestinian stance was racist.

According to information, the National Telecommunications Authority had started to implement measures to guarantee secrecy and prevent the use of devices and advanced technologies that seek to serve subscribers for purposes other than those for which they were designed, particularly activities that threaten Egyptian national security.

Ministry Denies Reports

NC2603133094 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1306 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 26 Mar (MENA)—The Communications Ministry stressed that the report published today by the newspaper AL-AHALI claiming that some intelligence services are tapping the telephone lines of some officials and political party leaders is completely baseless.

In a statement issued today, a ministry source said that there is absolutely no truth to reports that the computer-operated centers for receiving reports on faulty telephone lines, which the National Communications Authority has established, are being used to obtain information on the subscriber's line when reporting a fault. The source stressed that the line is tested in order to ascertain the type and location of the fault and to automatically record it so that the repair teams can correct the fault and restore the line to operations.

The source added that Egyptian engineers and technicians are in charge of these centers, that no person other than those working there are allowed in, and that there are no foreign experts working in these centers.

The statement went on to say that the fault-reporting centers are completely secure and no telephone line can be tapped while engaged. It added that there are no contacts or links between these centers and any foreign entity and this confirms that the Egyptian network cannot be technically penetrated.

The statement noted that the role of the company carrying out the work is limited to the installation of the equipment, and this is done under the supervision of the authority's engineers. The company's role ends once the equipment is received here and before being put into service.

Islamic Group To 'Avenge' Deaths of 8 Members

NC2503201594 Paris AFP in English 1945 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, March 25 (AFP)—An outlawed Islamic militant group warned Friday it would avenge the deaths of eight of its members who it said were "liquidated" by police.

The al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah (Islamic Group) said in a statement sent to AFP that the eight were killed after five policemen were shot dead last Sunday by al-Jama'ah militants in Sedfa, in the troubled southern province of Asyut.

The group said two militants were killed by police in fields, three died in a shootout in Balayza village in Asyut province, and three others were arrested at home in the same region then shot by police, who dumped their bodies next to the Balayza victims, saying all six died in the same gunbattle.

The al-Jama'ah said police had adopted a new tactic of releasing detained militants and "liquidating" them allegedly for taking part in attacks.

It called on human rights organisations to put pressure on the authorities "to stop such practices."

Islamic militants have targeted the security forces, foreigners and Coptic Christians in their two-year campaign to destabilise the country and topple the secular government of President Husni Mubarak.

More than 300 people have died in the unrest.

Explosive Charge Hurled at Car, Wounds 2 Officers

NC2603174194 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1700 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 26 Mar (MENA)—Two police officers sustained superficial wounds when three people in a car hurled an explosive charge at a car carrying three officers along the Cairo-Ismailia agricultural road.

An official source at the Interior Ministry stated that around 1515 today—as Captain Wa'il Ghazali, an officer at the Abu-Za'bal Prison in al-Galyubiyah, was driving his car in the company of Captain 'Imad Mustafa, chief detective at the prison, and First Lieutenant Ayman Salah, an officer at the same prison—three persons hurled an explosive charge at their car. The two accompanying officers, 'Imad Mustafa and Ayman Salah, were wounded as a result.

The two wounded officers were taken to the al-Khankah hospital for treatment. The police searched the area to locate the culprits.

3 Killed, 2 Injured in Clash With Police

NC2803053494 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2230 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Asyut, 27 Mar (MENA)—Three terrorists were killed in al-Ghana'im Town in Asyut Governorate tonight and two others were injured during an exchange of fire with security forces.

The incident happened when a security force ambush asked a Peugeot taxi to stop. When it did, the taxi's passengers suddenly opened fire with automatic weapons on the police. Captain 'Umar Mustafa al-Jundi, 1st Lieutenant Basyuni Ahmad 'Abd-al-Nabi, 1st Lt. Hisham Ahmad al-Sayyid, and Sergeant Ra'fat 'Ali Muhammad were slightly wounded.

The other members of the police force succeeded in chasing the taxi and fired at its tires to stop it. Three terrorists were killed and two others were injured as a result.

The injured policemen and terrorists were taken to hospitals for treatment.

The Asyut security commands and the criminal laboratory experts went to the site of the incident to investigate. The identities of the terrorists are being checked.

The Prosecution Office has been notified to start its investigations.

Gunmen Kill Suspected Police Informer in Asyut

NC2703194394 Paris AFP in English 1917 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Asyut, Egypt, March 27 (AFP)—Four gunmen believed to be Islamic militants shot dead a suspected police informer on Sunday at his shop in the troubled town of Asyut in southern Egypt, security officials said.

'Abd-al-Hafiz 'Abd-al-Na'im, 35, died on the way to hospital.

The officials said the outlawed Moslem fundamentalist organisation al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah (Islamic Group) suspected 'Abd-al-Na'im of informing police about its operations.

'Abd-al-Na'im's death raised to 53 the number of civilians killed since Islamic militants launched their violent anti-government campaign two years ago. The campaign has claimed a total of more than 300 lives.

Security Sweep Nets Political, Criminal Fugitives

NC2603101894 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0932 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 26 Mar (MENA)—During the past few days the security forces have seized 60 automatic weapons, a large number of pistols, and many other firearms of primitive manufacture. They also arrested 250 political suspects, some with earlier political convictions.

This news came in an announcement today by Major General Mansur al-'Isawi, assistant foreign minister and Cairo security director. He said this latest campaign, carried out on the instructions of Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi, focused primarily on Cairo's al-Matariyah, al-Basatin, al-Sharabiyah, and Manshiyat Nasir districts.

Maj. Gen. al-'Isawi added that the security forces also rounded up 350 other people suspected or convicted criminals.

He added that counternarcotics agents who assisted in the security campaign uncovered 350 narcotics cases in which various types of illegal drugs were involved. Two days ago one kg of heroin with an estimated value of two million Egyptian pounds was seized.

Al-'Isawi reported that the security sweeps began several days ago and spread over the northern, southern, eastern, and western sectors of Cairo. The campaign, in which units from the Central Security Forces, Public Security, Police, State Security Detective Force, and the Traffic police participated, was designed to tighten the noose around fugitive criminals.

The Cairo security director said that the campaign was fruitful.

Two Arrested for Manufacturing Firearms

NC2603121794 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1128 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 26 Mar (MENA)—Detectives arrested two individuals on charges of manufacturing firearms in Cairo's al-Sharabiyah area early today.

Major General Mahmud Wajdi, head of Cairo's General Investigation Department, stated that detectives from his department arrested Hasan Shihatah Husayn, 41, and Taha Muhammad al-Sayyid Ibrahim, 30, on charges of the criminal manufacture and commerce in unlicensed firearms.

He added that the following items were found in the possession of the two suspects: three locally manufactured pistols, three Russian pistols, three modified Beretta pistols, two Hulwan-style pistols, 41 bullets of various caliber, four pistol clips, 18 bullets, 12 9-mm bullets, 16 lengths of galvanized pipe ready for use in arms manufacture, and a number of apparatuses used in manufacturing firearms.

The suspects were referred to the Prosecutor's Office for interrogation.

More Security at Alleged Sidqi Assassins' Homes

NC2403154494 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 21 Mar 94 p 1

[Report by Najwa 'Abd-al-'Aziz]

[Text] The Interior Ministry yesterday started to reinforce the al-Qalyubiyah security agencies with "commandos" and threw tightened security cordons around the area of al-Khankah.

Strict security measures were taken around the homes of three extremists sentenced in connection with the attempt to kill Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi. The convicts are Salah Sulayman and Tariq Hasan al-Fahl, sentenced to death, and Muhammad Khalil, sentenced to life with hard labor.

The security agencies stepped up search campaigns in the underground terminals and on roads in the area of al-Marj to prevent weapons and explosives from reaching the families of the three convicts through extremist group members.

Sudan

Government: Foreigners Attempting To Disrupt Talks

EA2503162094 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1010 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Text] Khartoum, 25 March (SUNA)—Bishop Gabriel Rorech, minister of state at the Foreign Ministry, has said that the government is eager to continue negotiations with the rebel movement, because it thinks dialogue is the only means for reaching a comprehensive peace which will ensure the stability and development of Sudan.

His excellency stated in today's edition of AL-SUDAN AL-HADITH that he regretted interference from some foreign quarters, which are attempting to thwart the negotiations and are working to fragment the country's unity. He pointed out that the government clearly explained to the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development [IGADD] states that those foreign quarters did not want to see the establishment of peace, and were inciting the rebel movement in order that the negotiations fail. His excellency stated: We, as Sudanese, should advance the efforts of the IGADD in the negotiations, so that positive results are achieved. He confirmed that Sudan rejects foreign interference in the country's internal affairs.

Government To Expel American Relief Organization

AB2703151594 Dakar PANA in English 1113 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Khartoum, 27 March (PANA)—The Sudanese Government intends to expel an American relief organization, Area Development Agency (ADRA), which it accused of importing and distributing relief stuffs contaminated with bacteria. Quoting unnamed sources Saturday [26 March],the government owned newspaper AL-INQADH AL-WATANI alleged that ADRA had imported food contaminated with bacteria in mid 1993 for distribution in camps for southern Sudanese populations displaced by the civil war and drought. The paper said the organisation would be dismissed from Sudan in two days after the decision has been published by the attorney general.

The paper quoted the Sudanese commissioner for relief 'Abd al-Rahman Abu Dawm, as saying the behaviour of ADRA was contradictory with its duty as a humanitarian organization and breached the international laws and norms of human rights. He said ADRA had imported a mixtutre of food stuffs contaminated with bacteria with the intention of distributing it to the needy. "When concerned authorities refused the mixture the agency claimed that the shipment could be used as animal fodder," said Abu Dawm.

ADRA is one of the biggest reief organizations active in the Sudan. With offices in nearly all parts of western and southern Sudan with a wide number of staffers both local and foreign.

Kuwait

Ministers Deny Reports of Iraqi Build Up

LD2803084994 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 0700 GMT 28 Mar 94

[Text] Kuwait, 28 Mar—Information Minister Shaykh Sa'ud Nasir al-Sabah, in an interview to the daily AL-WATAN published here today, has denied the existence of any Iraqi build up on the Kuwaiti borders, pointing out that the build up was taking place in the north in Kirkuk and not in the south toward Kuwait.

For his part, Defense Minister Shaykh 'Ali Sabah al-Salim al-Sabah, in a similar interview to the paper, has stressed that the State of Kuwait was fully prepared to respond to any provocation or any reckless action the Baghdad regime might contemplate.

Shaykh 'Ali said "the situation on the northern borders is changeable. It could be reassuring today and the opposite tomorrow; however, our armed forces are prepared to face up to all eventualities", pointing to the existence of coordination with the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Egypt, and Syria.

On the other hand, AL-WATAN has attributed to a high ranking Foreign Ministry source as having said that the Foreign Ministry had checked the reports circulated by the Iraqi opposition, and it was ascertained that the 10th Division of the Iraqi Army has moved from the marshes area to the north.

The source stressed to the paper that the situation was under control, an aerial surveillance operation was carried out every two hours, all movements were monitored very closely and, according to available reports, the picture had not changed in 12 days.

Iraqi opposition in Syria reported two days ago the existence of an Iraqi forces build up estimated at 180,000 soldiers on the Kuwaiti borders.

Editorial on Military Resurgence of Iraqi Regime

JN2703211294 Kuwait AL-RA'Y AL-'AMM in Arabic 19 Mar 94 p 1

[Editorial: "Ineffectual Treatment of Chronic Condition"]

[Text] It was natural that the UN Security Council should restate the need to keep the sanctions in place, having reviewed the aberrant Baghdad regime's track record, which shows it to be persistent in its wrongheadedness, flouting all rules of international law. The Security Council has made Iraq's compliance with its resolutions a condition for lifting the sanctions. The nefarious calls that sought to crack the unity of the international position and thus unleash the Iraqi beast while it is still consumed with hatred and aggressiveness have collapsed.

With the extension of the sanctions, the international community must now be wondering about the point in seeking to remedy the pathological mindset and conduct that have typified Saddam Husayn's regime since his bloody coup in the early seventies. Can we realistically hope that the wolf will change its inherently treacherous ways? How much longer will it be before the Western powers satisfy themselves that the treatment is ineffectual and the cure impossible?

Our questions are prompted by a conviction supported by evidence that a disease persists and that amputation is the only cure to this corrupt regime. This is because the blockade and isolation have changed nothing in Saddam Husayn's behavior and mentality. He continues to issue threats. The dangers posed by the Baghdad regime will only go with its disappearance, since it has become a captive of positions based on treachery, aggression, and empty heroics, which it hopes will, one of these days, help him defeat the world!

The international community knew that the military confrontation that ended in the Iraqi occupation troops being driven from Kuwait was not enough to strike at the root of cause of aggression. Now, four years into the life of the sanctions and political isolation, this regime does not seem to have changed a bit. In its adamant refusal to recognize Kuwait's sovereignty over its territory, this regime is a peculiar mix of aggressiveness and arrogance. It continues to hold Kuwaiti prisoners as a bargaining chip, it flouts UN resolutions, and works to regain its offensive capabilities in order to resume the battle that has been weaved into its political fabric.

Trade sanctions and political isolation, as a form of treatment for this fatal disease, have ceased to have any healing effects. Every two months, the world will continue to review the Baghdad regime's compliance with the Security Council resolutions. However, the world will one day wake up to discover that this beast, which is swayed by an aggressive instinct, has unshackled itself to shed more blood; and herein lies the responsibility of the international community.

Oil Minister Welcomes OPEC Agreement

LD2603215494 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 2100 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Excerpt] Kuwaiti Oil Minister 'Ali Ahmad al-Baghli has expressed satisfaction at OPEC's decision tonight to maintain its current output ceiling until the end of this year.

The oil minister told KUNA that the agreement is the best that could be reached under the current circumstances. He said he believes that demand for oil and prices will improve during the third and fourth quarters of this year.

Concerning OPEC's stance on non-OPEC countries, the oil minister stated that the organization is waiting to get a firm commitment from those countries to freeze their

actual output, although it has received a verbal pledge on cooperation with OPEC members. [[passage omitted]

U.S. Position on UN Resolution, Jerusalem Noted

JN2603170694 Kuwait AL-RA'Y AL-'AMM in Arabic 17 Mar 94 p 1

[Editorial: "Unremembered Facts"]

[Text] Three weeks after Hebron's Ibrahimi Mosque massacre and the suspension of the Arab-Israeli talks on all tracks, the UN Security Council is still unable to reach agreement on a formula for a statement or a resolution putting the massacre in its true historical context as a consequence of the occupation and a logical result of Zionist settlement policies in Arab territories. Attempts to bypass the barrier of U.S. rejection of any UN resolution that goes beyond the superficial measures Israel has taken to absorb the world's anger have all failed. These measures sketch the state of the settlement activities and acknowledge their danger. But, they do not go beyond that to take a practical stand to end their tangible and potential effects, in the absence of any international deterrence of a repetition of the settlers' crime.

Today, when voting starts on the draft resolution, the United States will selectively choose the paragraphs that agree with its viewpoint. It will prove conclusively that the UN Security Council might be a forum for exchanging views on various international issues, but basically, and in the end, remains a mere reflection of the U.S. viewpoint, subject to predetermined strategic considerations. No one can influence this, regardless of how justified and logical his reasons may be, and regardless of how much they agree with the principles of justice and peace.

In all honesty, in its current position in the UN Security Council, the United States has shown a concern for its commitments. It has been faithful to the pledges it made to Israel in the form of assurances before the Madrid Conference and before the negotiations began. These assurances kept Jerusalem and the settlements outside any formula. The U.S. president recently reaffirmed this fact to freshen the memory of those who have forgotten the Madrid formula. This explains the U.S. objection to any paragraph that includes a reference to Jerusalem in the UN Security Council resolution that will establish a known reality, something the Arabs have already accepted implicitly.

What remains to be said is that the negotiations, suspended in protest against the shedding of Arab blood, will resume on the basis of generalities. This will save face, but will not change the reality that reaffirmed the facts, facts forgotten by the Arab mind and facts that taste of blood and suppression.

Oman

Pakistan's Bhutto Arrives on Visit

JN2603142894 Muscat Radio Oman Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Excerpt] Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto arrived today in Muscat on an official three-day visit to Oman. During the visit she will meet with His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id and senior government officials for talks on bolstering cooperation between the two countries in all fields.

Leading those who were on hand to receive the Pakistani prime minister was Thuwayni Bin-Shihab Al Sa'id, his majesty the sultan's personal representative. [passage omitted]

Bhutto, Sultan Meet

JN2703152794 Muscat Radio Oman Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Excerpt] His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id and Her Excellency Pakistani Prime Minister Mrs. Benazir Bhutto held a session of official talks at the al-Hisn Palace in Salalah today.

Talks dealt with relations between the two friendly states and ways to promote them in various fields in a way that would serve the interests of both the Omani and Pakistani peoples. The two sides also exchanged views on several international and regional issues of common concern. [passage omitted]

Qatar

Jordanian-Qatari Talks Resume in Doha

JN2403172294 Amman PETRA-JNA in Arabic 1550 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] Doha, 24 Mar (PETRA)—The Jordanian side, led by His Majesty King Husayn, and the Qatari side, led by His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani, the amir of Qatar, resumed their talks at Amiri Court today. His majesty presented an analysis of the dimensions of the Arab reality and the challenges facing the nation. He stressed the need to reinforce Arab solidarity, combine efforts, and unite stands out of concern for the nation's interests and the future of its generations, especially at this critical juncture in its history and in light of the challenges facing it.

Discussions dealt with the Middle East peace process and the suffering of the kinsfolk in the occupied homeland, that culminated in the massacre at the holy Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron. The two sides stressed the importance of coordination among Arab countries, especially in terms of taking part in the peace process. They emphasized the importance of consultations among Arab countries in order to avoid making mistakes, selling out, or neglecting any of the nation's rights.

His Majesty King Husayn thoroughly explained what Jordan did in the wake of the holy Ibrahimi Mosque massacre and the steps and measures it took before the UN Security Council adopted its recent resolution on the ugly massacre.

The two sides discussed Jordan's continuing efforts to protect the Islamic holy places in holy Jerusalem, especially His Majesty King Husayn's efforts and concern about restoring the holy Dome of the Rock and rebuilding Salah-al-Din's rostrum just as it was before. They discussed relations between the two fraternal countries in the political, economic, and cultural fields and on various levels.

The talks were permeated by a spirit of brotherhood, understanding, and eagerness to reinforce cooperation between the two fraternal countries and to continue meetings between officials to achieve this purpose.

His Majesty King Husayn extended an invitation to His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani, the amir of Qatar, and to His Highness Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, the Qatari heir apparent and defense minister, to visit Jordan. They accepted the invitation and promised to respond to it as soon as possible. [passage omitted]

Yemen

Al-Bid Warns Against Dividing Arab Region

JN2703201594 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1930 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Sanaa, 27 Mar (INA)—Yemeni Vice President 'Ali Salim al-Bid has warned against a scheme aimed at fragmenting the Arab and Islamic region under the guise of religion to divert the Arabs and Muslims from the course of development.

In a statement published today in AL-MUSTAQBAL newspaper, the paper of the Yemeni Socialist Party, al-Bid disclosed that the signs of this serious scheme are represented by the acts of violence, terrorism, and crime from which many Arab and Muslim countries, including Yemen, are suffering.

Al-Bid noted that this scheme, which stands against every national and pan-Arab tendency toward unity, takes religion as a guise. He added that reason and religion reject such backward plans.

Al-Bid Receives Egyptian Envoy, Mubarak's Message

JN2503205594 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Text] Brother 'Ali Salim al-Bid, vice chairman of the Presidential Council and secretary general of the Yemeni Socialist Party [YSP], today received at the economic and trade capital, Aden, Ambassador Badr Hammam, Egyptian assistant foreign minister and Egyptian President Husni Mubarak's envoy.

During the meeting, the brother vice chairman of the Presidential Council received a message from his brother Egyptian President Mubarak [words indistinct] the implementation of the pledge and accord document, which was signed in the Jordanian capital, Amman, on 10 Ramadan [20 February], and the removal of all obstacles that hamper its implementation. They also discussed bilateral relations and ways of promoting them.

Brother 'Ali Salim al-Bid expressed appreciation for the Egyptian stand and the brother Egyptians' interest in [words indistinct] and democracy in our country. Brother al-Bid briefed Ambassador Badr Hammam on developments in the situation on the national front.

The meeting was attended by 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Dali, member of the YSP political bureau and secretary of the YSP political section, and Muhammad Salih [last name indistinct], acting [words indistinct] of the Foreign Ministry in Aden.

Foreign Minister Urges Lifting Sanctions on Iraq

JN2703143694 Baghdad INA in English 1300 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (INA)—Yemen Foreign Minister Mr. Muhammad Salim Basindwah described the continuation of sanctions imposed on Iraq as an act against the international law and world relations and does not serve the security in the region.

Mr. Basindwah told INA here today that the continuation of the sanctions aimed to prevent the Security Council from adopting a resolution for the sake of Iraq.

He urged the council to be more just concerning the Arab issues mainly the question of lifting the sanction imposed on Iraq.

Al-'Attas Chairs Cabinet Session in Aden

JN2703212394 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] The Council of Ministers held a meeting in Aden, the economic and trade capital, today under the chairmanship of Prime Minister brother Haydar Abu-Bakr al-'Attas. During the meeting, the Council reviewed the results of the work of the committee formed in its previous meeting to prepare draft laws to implement the accord document.

The Council of Ministers made a number of decisions within this framework and formed a number of specialized committees to accomplish the tasks required by the accord document in accordance with the time framework defined in the document. The decisions call for presenting a plan to arrest fugitive suspects, prison

escapees, and those abetting these suspects. The decisions also call for completing investigations on detained suspects and referring them to court. The decisions also call for the formation of a committee to search for camps or bases for training and preparing Yemenis and foreigners to carry out acts of violence.

The Council of Ministers also decided to form a committee to remove checkpoints from cities and to define the appropriate places to set up security checkpoints. The Council of Ministers also decided to form a preparatory committee to hold a national conference for general reconciliation among tribes, in accordance with which there will be no more acts of revenge.

Furthermore, the Council of Ministers formed a military committee to draw up plans to move military units from the so-called outskirts in some areas in the Governorates of Ta'izz, Lahij, Ibb, Abyan, Shabwah, al-Bayda', and Ma'rib, and to redeploy them in positions from which they can defend vital targets and the strategic defense requirements of the state.

The Council of Ministers decided to form a committee to prepare a draft law for establishing the intelligence department to defend national sovereignty, as well as another committee to prepare draft laws for security affairs.

The Council of Ministers charged the command of the Defense Ministry to present a plan to evacuate the Armed Forces from the cities and to redeploy them in preparation for their merger and for straightening out their affairs.

The Council of Ministers charged the ministers of interior and defense with the implementation of the tasks mentioned in Paragraphs 13 and 16 of the security and military part of the accord document.

The Council of Ministers decided to form a committee to supervise the first part of the accord document related to the security and military part.

The Council of Ministers also decided to form a committee to prepare draft laws and bylaws to (?determine) the relationship and define the powers and tasks of the chairman, vice chairman, and members of the Presidential Council in accordance with the Constitution. The committee will also review the Council of Ministers Law and the bylaws of the Presidential Council office.

The Council of Ministers decided to form a committee to prepare a draft law for the administrative division of the republic and a draft law for local governments.

The Council of Ministers also decided to form a national committee to prepare a draft law for the constitutional amendments and a draft law for elections.

At the end of the meeting, the Council of Ministers charged the prime minister, his deputies, and the committee formed under the chairmanship of Deputy Prime Minister Muhammad Haydarh Masdus with naming the members of the committees that the Council of Ministers decided to form in this meeting and with announcing the decisions of the Council of Ministers.

The Council of Ministers decided to hold its next meeting in Ta'izz after two weeks, God willing.

YSP Member Reportedly Assassinated in Sanaa

JN2703201094 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1915 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Sanaa, 27 Mar (INA)—A member of the Yemeni Socialist Party [YSP], a party to the ruling coalition, was assassinated the day before yesterday [25 March]. An INA correspondent in Sanaa today cited a YSP official source as saying that the body of Haydar 'Abdallah Ghalib was found near the University of Sanaa after he was stabbed to death by unknown persons.

Saddam Chairs Meeting on UNSC Debate

JN2703225494 Baghdad INA in Arabic 2100 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Baghdad, 27 Mar (INA)—His Excellency leader President Saddam Husayn has chaired a joint session of the Revolution Command Council [RCC] and the Iraq Command of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party [ASBP].

The meeting reviewed the visit to New York by an Iraqi delegation led by Tariq 'Aziz, deputy prime minister and member of the RCC and the Iraqi Command of the ASBP, and the outcome of his contacts with the members of the UN Security Council.

After the meeting, an official spokesman made the following statement:

Our delegation noticed that there are circles in the Security Council that may grow into a majority that have begun to sense the harshness of the blockade to which the Iraqi people are being subjected. These circles are taking a positive outlook on Iraq's implementation of the obligations enshrined in Resolution 687. The nations that represent this trend stressed the need for Rolf Ekeus to present a monthly report to the council about the Special Commission's relations with Iraq and for this to lead to the commission setting the beginning and period of what was called the test in order for the Security Council to move to the implementation of Paragraph 22, which should not take long.

Some council members mentioned six months as a suitable period to test the implementation mechanism. Other member nations wondered why the period could not be a little shorter or longer to make sure that Ekeus draws up his timetable on clear and practical grounds rather than be swayed by political goals that do not meet with the agreement of the council's members who moved from a new positive position in their approach to this issue.

This constructive and fair position was shared by France, Russia, and the PRC, along with other nations like Brazil, Pakistan, Nigeria, and Rwanda, among others. On the other hand, the United States and its supporters, or the countries that are influenced by its analyses and intentions, view things from the perspective of fabricating excuses to drag out the blockade on our people and avoid a commitment to a fixed date for implementing Paragraph 22, which allows Iraq to export its products, including oil, to the outside world

The conclusion we have drawn is that an important positive development has occurred in the position of important and influential circles in the Security Council. This development requires follow-up and encouragement in order to know for certain whether or not there is should be serious and imminent hope for the lifting of the injustice done to Iraq. The next two months will be important to make clear conclusions in light of what President Saddam Husayn announced in his address to the council of ministers on Sunday, 13 March 1994, the first day of the blessed 'Id al-Fitr. After two months, the ASBP command and the RCC will be able to make the suitable decisions.

The official spokesman said: On this occasion, we pay special tribute to the states whose positions were clear in this direction. These specifically included France, Russia, China, and Brazil. We appeal to these countries to develop their positions to become clearer and more influential within the Security Council and the circles in which they have influence. While following up all the details of these developments, our great people will not forget the fair stands of these states and whoever support this just position. It is obvious that the basis for the development in the stands of these countries vis-a-vis Iraq is the firmness and patience of our great people; their active social, political, and economic life; our people's strong adherence to their future; and their firm and unshakeable faith in their nationalism.

The ASBP command and the RCC adopted a series of instructions and resolutions to follow up the political and diplomatic move in the coming period and until the next Security Council review [of the sanctions on Iraq] in the second half of May.

Minister Urges UN To Implement Resolution 778

JN2503210994 Baghdad INA in Arabic 2006 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Text] New York, 25 Mar (INA)—Iraq has called on the United Nations to implement Security Council Resolution 778 requiring all countries that hold deposits representing proceeds from Iraqi oil sales or products, paid in or after August, 1990, to transfer these funds from the suspended guarantee account [hisab al-daman al-mu'allaq] as laid out in Resolutions 706 and 712.

This came in a letter from Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf to UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali.

The letter emphasized the need to observe the general rules requiring that Iraqi money deposited in the suspended account be invested efficiently and that the proceeds be added to the principal.

Following is the text of the letter:

Your Excellency Butrus Butrus-Ghali,
UN Secretary General,
New York

Regarding UN Security Council Resolution 778 of 1992, I would like to point out the following:

1. Paragraph 1 of the said resolution decided that all the countries that hold deposits of money for the Iraqi Government which represent proceeds of Iraqi oil sales or oil products, paid in or after August 1990, must transfer the funds as early as possible to the suspended guarantee account, as laid out in Resolution 706 and 712 of 1991.

Inasmuch as the money put into the Iraqi deposit accounts cannot legally come under this heading, since, although it represents the proceeds of oil sales, having become part of the account it loses this capacity. The money thus becomes Iraqi deposits, in view of the fact that the source of the debt changed from a sales contract to a bank deposit. Consequently, the money does not represent oil sales as stated in the resolution.

The argument stated above supports Paragraph 2 of the same Security Council resolution referring to the proceeds from oil sales before they are added to any account. This means the sale price must go into the suspended credit account.

2. According to banking transaction rules, a suspended account owner, in our case the Iraqi Government, does not lose it. Accordingly, as the legal proprietor of the account, the Iraqi Government's opinion must be taken into consideration in all that affects the account.

3. It must also be taken into account that the general rules require funds deposited in the suspended account to be invested efficiently and their proceeds added to the principal.

From the above, it is obvious that the provisions of the said Security Council resolution are illegal; indeed, they flout established banking norms that form the foundations of international trade.

Kindly distribute this letter as a document of the Security Council. Regards.

Al-Sahhaf Comments on UN Position, Other Issues

JN2503173894 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 16 Mar 94 p 2

[Report on Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf's statement on Iraqi Television on 15 March: "Al-Sahhaf: Resolution 706 Contains Traps and Snares To Shackle Iraq and To Continue Imposing the Blockade; There Is a Treacherous Game in Applying the Resolutions Aimed At Avoiding Fulfillment of Obligations"]

[Text] Iraqi Television last night carried an interview with Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf in which he reviewed the provisions of the resolutions which were issued by the UN Security Council, Iraq's position on them, and the lack of any justifications for these resolutions now that Iraq has fulfilled its obligations.

The minister remarked that this subject needs to be explained and clarified in detail in view of the conspiracies and intrigue which the enemies of Iraq and Arabdom have woven around it.

The minister said: Let me begin by pointing out very briefly that Resolution (687) was passed on 3 April 1991 after being submitted by the henchmen of the imperialist powers. There were 16 drafts before the resolution was finally put to a vote. Some 12 member states voted for the resolution. Cuba, which was daring and courageous, voted against it. Two other non-permanent member states; Ecuador and Yemen, abstained. Some member states, such as China and others, gave their vote for the resolution, but they also explained their position on it and contested some of its provisions.

The minister added: The resolution has a preamble and 34 operative paragraphs. It is a long, complicated resolution and its operative paragraphs are purposely divided into 9 sections, of which Section (C) is the axis. The leader president had dealt with this section in his [13 March] speech. The resolution was passed on 3 April, and on 6 April Iraq nofied the Security Council of its frank and clear position on it in a long, precise message based on the principles of international law and the UN Charter. Iraq dealt with all those paragraphs, explaining how they conflicted with the principles of international law. Iraq concluded its message—and it is important that I mention this—by citing the words of its then Foreign Minister Professor Ahmad Husayn: "While recording these principled, legal, and legitimate observations, Iraq appeals to men of free conscience among the members of the international community and world public opinion to understand the truth as it is and to support justice as they should. Iraq has found itself faced with one choice only, which is to accept this resolution." We then requested that our message be distributed as a document of the Security Council, and this was done.

The minister added: The purpose was to establish our legal and legitimate position which was based on the UN Charter and the principles of international law so that our rights would not be lost even if we had to accept the resolution under the existing circumstances.

Al-Sahhaf said: The second remark I would like to make—and this is very important also—is that on line three of its preamble, Resolution (687) affirms the member states' commitment to defending Iraq's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence. But no sooner had they mentioned this sentence than they went about violating it in several paragraphs of the same resolution. Several paragraphs conflict with this basic principle on which international society is founded.

Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf pointed out that he had to make this remark so people will fully comprehend the unfair general blockade which is being imposed on Iraq. The minister said: Resolution (661), which was issued on 6 August 1990, explained why the unjust blockade was imposed. It was imposed because Iraq did not approve Resolution (660) which was issued on 2 August 1990. What does Resolution (660) say? Resolution (660) has two paragraphs providing for Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait, calling on Iraq and Kuwait to sit together to solve their problems, and noting that the Security Council welcomed all efforts being exerted, including those of the Arab League, to achieve this aim.

The minister said: Later, Iraq approved all the resolutions; namely, 660, 661, and so forth. Still, the Security Council did not fulfill its obligations. So they came and drafted this resolution [687], thus "swallowing up" all their previous resolutions on the one hand, and producing new conditions and a new situation which only exposes the real aims of the whole aggression against Iraq.

The minister added: Everyone in our society must know how matters were twisted at every stage and the purpose behind doing so. Resolution (687) has 34 operative paragraphs. The preamble refers to Iraq's political independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity only as a formality. The preamble also includes certain principles which were carefully selected by those who drafted the resolution in order to serve as a background and a basis for the operative paragraphs which, in themselves, are a gross violation of international law and the UN Charter in particular.

The minister said: The key point of Resolution (687), to which the leader president referred in his speech, is Section (C). This section includes Paragraphs (7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13). Paragraph (14) is an explanation saying if Paragraphs 7-13 are applied successfully to Iraq, it would the beginning of their application to the entire Middle East to turn it into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. They have not yet done anything on this score.

The minister said: Regarding Section (C), which includes the paragraphs I just mentioned, they said: We know that you Iraqis have weapons of mass destruction. These weapons exist in the following fields: the nuclear field, the chemical field, the biological field, and the delivery systems field; that is missiles. They also said: We have Paragraphs 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 to apply and we will set up a UN Special Commission for that. There is also the International Agency for Atomic Energy, which specializes in these matters. The Special Commission and the agency have been instructed to work out a plan with you. You will tell them the weapons and missiles you have. Teams from the Special Commission and the agency will come to inspect them, and the existing arsenal will be destroyed. We will inspect the sites where you manufactured and installed the machines and plants which produce these weapons. We will remove parts of these machines so that they would no longer be able to produce chemical weapons or missiles with a range of more than 150 km.

The minister added: They wanted us to reveal all that we had and to destroy it. They wanted us to destroy the weapons, which were banned under the provisions of this resolution, and also the machines and factories connected with their production. Once these steps were taken, Iraq would have nothing left and would be in no position to produce anything.

The minister said: They said: But in order to make sure that you Iraqis—and we know you are a clever and dynamic people—will not go back to producing these weapons, we will set up a future monitoring system. They mentioned in Section (C) of Resolution (687) that the monitoring system would last for one year.

The minister said: Since they accepted the resolution, one would presume that based their acceptance on the principles of law, international relations, and the UN Charter, meaning, first, that whatever they requested under Section (C) would not prejudice Iraq's national sovereignty and independence, its ability for development, and its right to self-determination, which are basic for any society and country. We presumed that our dealing began on the basis of the provisions and principles I mentioned.

The minister added: We have been following Section (C) since the cease-fire in 1991. The leader president said: Tell us what you want so we can sit together, discuss it, and destroy some machines and plants to make them unserviceable. And in order to reassure everyone we will also set up a monitoring system. This has been going on since 1991. We did more than we promised. For the sake of precision and to prove to our people, I will mention some of the documents which we deposited with the United Nations and which are now considered documents of the Security Council. They asked us to begin with the nuclear field first, and we did. They said we want Iraq to announce its commitment to the Nonproliferation Treaty, we said: Fine, we have the following: six letters which were sent by the foreign minister containing Iraq's adherence to the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 16 messages and statements confirming that Iraq does not possess nuclear weapons and that it does not produce these weapons or any substance that goes into their production, 62 letters containing Iraqi declarations on nuclear positions, and 23 nuclear teams. Then they said: Tell us about the components of the Iraqi nuclear program. We told them what we had: 547 tonnes of natural uranium [yuraniyum tabi'i] and 50 kgs of highly enriched fuel. They took them and transported them outside Iraq. We said also that we had 1,850 kgs of a fairly enriched uranium, 6 kgs of plutonium for scientific research, and 6 tonnes of uranium waste. That was all.

They carried out a thorough inspection. Then, they said: We want to know the stages of your nuclear program. So, we told them that our stages are as follows: Extraction of uranium from ore and its transformation into uranium compounds. We have electromagnetics, chemicals, and central [word indistinct]. All this is for research. We also process fuels. This framework, as you can see, is very normal. We have nuclear reactors we bought from you. We have an electro-nuclear power project, plants to retrieve depleted (wasted) nuclear fuel, and a plant for the treatment of radioactive waste. We have scientific research efforts that are connected to the program. Our position is the same as that of any other nation or state that is conducting research. It is all scientific research for

use in medicine and agriculture, as part of the development programs. Finally, we have agricultural and medical applications, to which we have already referred. Of course, we have a nuclear safety system, nuclear safety measures, and the engineering support for them.

The minister said: They saw and thoroughly inspected what we had. Talks with [UN chief inspector] Ekeus began in July 1993. They continued in September, October, and November of that year, and in New York, as well. In his capacity as the representative of the International Agency for Atomic Energy, he wrote—we have the document because it is a now Security Council document—saying: There are no more secrets in the Iraqi program. Iraq has approved Resolution 715 concerning permanent monitoring. We believe Iraq has fulfilled all its obligations.

The minister said: Regarding the chemical field, we followed the same line. We told them what we have. I will mention some figures, because we have them in our records and they are also documented with the Security Council.

The minister continued: Some 12 large chemical inspection teams came, under Paragraph 9 of Section C, to see the records, visit the sites, and obtain samples. We detailed our stockpile: 10,780 pieces of missile hardware ['atad sawarikh] for 122-mm missiles, 1,776 shells [qanbarah], 12,634 artillery shells, 30 al-Husayn missile warheads and 2,000 mortar shells. We said you can visit the sites where this hardware is produced, and the development laboratories, as well. They inspected them. Then they asked: Where are the simple materials [al-mawad al-basitah]? We told them that the stockpile of active materials [al-mawad al-'awamil] is 280 tonnes, and the simple materials stockpile is 75 tonnes. They asked to see the canisters. We told them here are 45,000 canisters for 122-mm missiles and 5,000 shells for 250-mm missiles, and here are the 24,000 that were destroyed in the bombing. They were all destroyed in the bombing. They saw it all, including the scrap metal. Then, they began inspecting. Later, they said: We want to see the documents.

The minister added: We gave them the nuclear documents, which totaled more than 60,000 pages. Then they asked for the documents on chemical weapons. We told them they were destroyed in the bombing. Then they told us: We want you to remember everything and write it down on paper. Iraqi experts exerted great efforts and wrote down everything in order to eliminate any excuse. Ekeus wrote on a piece of paper: I find this to be satisfactory, meeting all requirements. Ekeus then heard the statements by the official in charge of the Iraqi and Gulf Section in the U.S. State Department and by the U.S. National Security Council adviser. He became suspicious after hearing these statements, although we had a signed document between us in which he said that what he saw was satisfactory and met all requirements. When he heard those people speaking in this way, he decided that he wanted more information and that what we had given him was not enough. Some 12 large chemical teams came. They left nothing unearthed. They analyzed water and soil. They carried out air inspections. They were very provocative, but the Iraqis restrained themselves and remained very patient. The behavior of the others was really bad and provocative.

The minister said: Iraq did not have anything in the biological field. Actually, what we had was just scientific research. We did not have any secrets. The so-called reinforced microbes [mikrubat mujahhadah] were purchased from the United States for purely scientific research, not for biochemical weapons. Several experts came and saw them. Then they said: We want to see the laboratories, even in those in Iraqi universities. They also asked if there were any private sector laboratories.

Regarding the missiles, we told them: This is what we have. Here are the al-Husayn missiles. Here are the Scuds we got from the Russians. We gave them details. During this period, they brought in 21 teams, if not more, consisting of missile specialists.

The minister said: The United States continued to play the same tune, i.e., that Iraq hid some missiles. So, they launched a new search campaign. I call it a search campaign, not an inspection campaign. They brought in helicopters and gamma ray spectrometers to discover what Iraq might have hidden underground. They then toured the country. They stayed for several weeks. The American lie was exposed.

The minister added: Finally, they asked for the records about the disposal of missiles. We gave them the records. Then they said: We want to see if these documents are original or recent. They brought in a team to inspect the documents. Then they said: The documents are original, but we will take them to Europe for further inspection by more sensitive instruments, although we are sure they are original. We will take them to inspect them. We patiently said: Take them. Then we said: Fine, we have covered all fields under Paragraphs 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 of Section C. Nothing has been left uninspected.

I will now mention how far they have gone in their behavior. They said: We want to go to the southern marshlands, because we received information about possible leftover chemical weapons that were used there. We said: This is very ridiculous. They said: Still, we must go. We took them to the south. They wore protective suits against chemical weapons. They were flat on the ground while helicopters hovered over their heads. They located an object stuck into ground. They walked over cautiously, tied a rope round it, fearing it might explode. When they pulled it out it turned out to be used mortar shell. I still remember how some of them shook their heads shamefully, and others said: These people—meaning the Americans—are making a mockery of us.

The minister said: We knew right from the start that it was an intentional thing. This was one of hundreds, if not thousands, of examples that Iraqis have patiently endured since 1991.

The minister added: You may not have heard some of the remarks made about the Ministry of Agriculture, which turned out to be theatrical, since they did not find any of the things they claimed were inside the Ministry. Actually, there was nothing in the Ministry. But since they had nothing to say, they wrote in their report: We found in one of the rooms "a scratch" on a wall caused by a chair. Apparently, the employee using this particular chair placed it against the wall, causing the scratch. They said in the report: We saw the chair but its back was not as high as the scratch. So, it was not the chair that caused scratch. This means the chair that made the scratch was replaced. They included that in the report as evidence. The report was referred to the UN Security Council. You know how tense relations were with the Security Council, which wanted any justification in order to deceive the world about the aggressive threats being made by peoples' hangmen.

The minister said: As you can see, I am only citing examples and completely avoiding any personal comment. I dealt with this person, Ekeus, right from the start. I recall that during our meeting together during his last visit here in February 1994, we asked him certain specific questions. I asked him: Why this delay? What more is asked of us? We explained what we have. You also know what we destroyed. I also gave you figures. Then they said they wanted whatever we mentioned in writing. They said: Actually, we saw the destroyed ammunition, and the picture you presented to us was clear, but please remember everything and put it down in writing. They wanted us to sit down, remember everything, and commit it to writing. We had to think and remember what happened in a certain month or a certain year, what empty shell, magazine, or simple weapon was used, and for what purpose.

The minister said: Iraqi technicians sat down and very patiently searched their brains so as to eliminate any excuse. They produced a full record for Ekeus. He was astonished by the results. He said: What you have written down from memory is sufficient and meets the purpose. We recorded it in our joint minutes. But the Western henchmen said it was not enough. We could not accept their haphazard remarks. We told Ekeus: Sit down. You said the record was sufficient and met the purpose. Therefore, this change in attitude is politically motivated in order to prolong the blockade of Iraq. Some Western henchmen say this is not enough. To be honest, most members in the Security Council are against the extension of the blockade on Iraq, because they have begun to see the irrefutable facts. But the Americans are known for influencing and blackmailing others, and Ekeus knows that. During the last meeting in February regarding the monitoring, Gart [name as transliterated] produced a chart and reminded me of Resolution 706, which provides for exporting oil worth $1.6 billion. The world knows only that oil is to be exported. But it does not know the traps and snares inherent in this resolution designed to shackle Iraq. All these traps and snares are actually intended to make us approve the monitoring system details.

The minister said: Fine, you have worked out everything. Ekeus said: Well, I cannot say that. I said: Fine, why don't you find out? You have the Special Commission and the experience. You have used everything, including espionage aircraft. And now you say you do not know anything. How can that be? He said: We do not have the capability. I said: Fine, when the Americans wanted to support Iranian claims that Iraq used chemical weapons in the Gulf, you made a big uproar. A working team was immediately dispatched to the south. Fine, let us talk about monitoring. Iraq and its people have been very patient with you since 1991. Yet, you now say that you do not have the capability. This is unacceptable. We ask you, in fact, it is our right—or, to be more precise, it is our minimum right—to work out a timetable to apply to what remains, if you have something new to be monitored. Practically speaking, the monitoring began in December 1993, it is in progress, and the inspection cameras have been mounted at missile sites and nuclear establishments. The inspection teams also continue to operate in the factories. They even marked some machines with tape, saying they must not be used. Ekeus came to us saying: There are machines in some factories that must not be used until the monitoring system has been installed. So, he produced some tape and stuck it on the machines, although they are ordinary commercial machines that the Iraqi could have used for months. Tape was stuck on machines, cameras were installed in two places, to inspect missile engines and in the nuclear sector. Iraqi laboratories are under inspection and all the monitoring measures have been taken, yet Ekeus comes and says: But our capabilities are limited. This is an obvious lie. Its purpose is to waste time and to continue the blockade of the Iraqi people. We told Ekeus in February: This is our minimum right. We have been patient with you until now.

The minister said: We said let us work out a timetable. He evaded the subject. We pressed him. We held three meetings that continued for hours. But he prevaricated like a fox in the forest, as the leader president said. He said: We must have a protocol, or a record, for each factory specifying the type of monitoring being conducted in it. We should also set up logs. Although this was completely unacceptable, we told him: Let it be, although we are not 100-percent convinced that you have the capability. We know what your capabilities are. We know what the Americans have placed at your disposal. We ask you: How many Iraqi engineers and experts do you want? Two hundred? Take 200. They will help you accomplish your work quickly, according to this timetable. As far as we are concerned, we believe monitoring began in December 1993. Ekeus said: If I agreed to that, they would say I was cooperating with the Iraqis. What a weak excuse! So, he completely avoided committing himself to a timetable, which is our minimum right.

The minister said: The announcement should have been made in December 1993. But now that we are in this phase, let us respond to the one who brought up the fabrication, although the resolution clearly says that once Iraq has fulfilled its obligations in these fields there can be nothing left against it. It was Ekeus who came up with this prevarication. We do not know where he got it from. Monitoring began in December 1993. The six-month period is a baseless fabrication. The resolution itself, as we have heard, spoke of one year. The leader president has proved this. The game has become only too clear, not just to the politicians, but to any citizen, observer, or anyone with an ordinary interest in this subject. He can see very clearly that there is a treacherous game that goes beyond this resolution. No matter what anyone might say, this resolution violates the entire UN Charter and the fundamentals of international law. The game has been completely exposed. Ekeus wanted to maintain the blockade on Iraq, so he looked for any excuse to avoid his obligations. That is quite obvious.

The minister added: As soon as the inspection teams began their work, we should have said that there was nothing left unfavorable to our country. But the mean, mean game has continued ever since. We have been very patient. I say this because we have, indeed, been very patient; in fact, too patient, about the enemy's own standards, assumptions, and violations of our sovereignty. These people are aggressors who resorted to any feeble excuse to implement the resolution their way. All these steps could have taken in the spring of 1992, but they wanted to continue injuring the Iraqi people, because they are the only people who said "no" to the entire imperialist-Zionist game. So, they have continued to play the fox in the forest to this day. Even now, they insist on what they are doing. I will mention some figures. You all recall the U.S. spy David Kay. He fabricated a crisis. Therefore, they issued Resolution 707, that included several paragraphs violating Iraq's sovereignty and independence. I will cite some of the provisions in this resolution. The provisions say the inspection teams have the right to intercept any car, ship, or plane; enter any house or place; storm any building; and completely freeze Iraqi rights, even with regard to medicine. Even isotopes needed for medicine were withheld from us. Yet, they say all Security Council states uphold Iraq's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence.

The minister continued: They imposed the no-fly zone in the South on 28 August. Before that, they imposed the no-fly zone in the North. From 28 August to 31 December 1993, the Americans violated Iraqi sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence 25,534 times; that is more than 10 times daily. There were days when there were 80 violations. This is in addition to dropping flares on fields from low-flying aircraft. Thousands of Iraqi women suffered abortions. Several diseases were caused. Many people's interests were disrupted. This was just during that period. But what did those who imposed this situation do? What did those who included in the resolution the sentence about member states upholding Iraq's independence, territorial integrity, and political independence do? They committed scores of violations daily. We have recorded everything. They have all been documented with the United Nations and even the Arab League. Let us now restrict our discussion to the Security Council and Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687, which represents the minimum Iraqi rights. As I said, the picture now in the Security Council is as follows: Those renegades who want continuation of the blockade on the Iraqi people are a minority in the council. The majority in the council, without mentioning names, call for the need to speed up the implementation of Paragraph 22. The majority includes some of the permanent members of the UN Security Council. They are also a majority within the five big powers; in fact, three of the big powers. What is taking place in the Security Council is a reflection of the international situation. I believe that to a large extent these changes are an expression of an international awakening, albeit slowly, to the big plot planned in the eighties and carried out against Iraq. The so-called new world order was aimed at Iraq and the world. The changes taking place in the Security Council are an expression of this comparatively slow awakening. We might be able to expedite this awakening.

The minister added: Tangible changes are definitely taking place in the Security Council. The reason is that Iraq has fulfilled all its obligations under this resolution, despite its unfairness. The so-called new world order has also been exposed. Iraqi blood was shed, but the Iraqis remained patient all this time. When the evil directed against Iraq began to affect others, the changes started. Everyone said: God help the Iraqis and give them patience. Yes, when the spark of fire began to reach others, they started asking questions: What is going on? They could not stand it. What can we say about the Iraqis who had to endure this for four years; who were hit by the equivalent of seven nuclear bombs? Iraq will soon enter the fourth year of the blockade. Indeed, the change has started.

The minister said: The leader president, may God preserve him, spoke about the nature of the mission of Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz. I have just spoken about general climate of this mission, which is very clear, documented, and founded on a basis that any sensible and logical person can understand and come to the same conclusion as the leader president, i.e., that the game has been exposed and Iraq is only demanding its rights under Paragraph 22; rights that should have been applied in the spring of 1992. The international situation now—actually the change became evident in the last quarter of 1993—is very different from what it was on 3 April 1991. The resoluton was issued at an inadvertent moment in history, within the game, or plot, of the so-called new world order. They tried to establish something that conflicted with the nature of things in all parts of the world. So, their plans were deadlocked in 1992 and 1993 and began to be exposed after the last quarter of 1993.

The minister explained: The international atmosphere now is clearly in favor of Iraqi rights. This inclination exists in the Security Council. As I said, the majority in the Security Council are demanding implementation of Paragraph 22. Their conscience is burdened by the Iraqi people's sufferings as a result of this despicable crime committed against them since the imposition of the blockade; in fact, since the issuance of Resolution 661 on 6 August 1990. The majority is making demands. There are divisions in the minority and even inside the United States itself.

The minister said: Actually, a significant debate took place within one of the subcommittees of the Congressional Foreign Relations Committee. The debate was between Committee Chairman Lee Hamilton, a Democrat and a Clinton supporter, and Assistant Secretary of State Pelletreau. The latter was U.S. ambassador to Tunisia during the initial contacts with the PLO. He was then transferred to the State Department. Pelletreau was summoned to testify before the committee. Hamilton himself put the questions to Pelletreau. He asked him: Tell me, what do you want from Iraq? Pelletreau tried to dodge the question, but Hamilton kept coming back with the same question, saying: You are not making it clear to me. I want you to say exactly what you want from Iraq. What is it that Iraq has not fulfilled and must fulfill before the blockade is lifted? Pelletreau replied: I believe it will be wise if I do not answer your question. The question was repeated ten times, but Pelletreau remained evasive. Hamilton then told him: Go now and come back after one or two weeks with a written reply.

The minister said: This shows that even inside the enemy map the atmosphere is no longer the same as the one they fabricated and presented in 1991. Yes, the situation is changing and will continue to change. We have all seen how world nations changed their attitude when spark from the fire that hit Iraq and the Iraqi people began reaching them. They stood up and said: This is unacceptable.

The foreign minister said: Iraqi rights will definitely be achieved. The arguments, evidence, and documents we have just outlined will silence the largest of them. Who will continue to be stubborn once he has been exposed? I believe justice will prevail and that Iraqi rights will triumph. No one has been as patient as the Iraqi people. No one has withstood such a savage onslaught as our people. I believe our people will remain steadfast until they hold final victory in their hand and regain their rights, God willing.

[Badawi] Are there any other implicit conditions set by the United States before lifting the blockade on Iraq, even partially? Are there conditions related to Iraq's internal situation?

[Salih] The resolution itself does not include any conditions, except those I have just mentioned, i.e., the application of the clauses related to Iraq. But outside the resolution, there are proposals. Yes, there are proposals, including, for example, the issue of human rights and respect for human rights. The issue is completely reversed. It is not the Government of Iraq that violates human rights. It is the U.S. Government and some officials in the United States and Britain that violate human rights in Iraq. They are interfering in Iraq's domestic affairs in violation of the UN Charter. They imposed two no-fly zones on the official forces, apart from the Security Council's resolutions. There is no Security Council resolution in this regard. These pretexts have become weak. These justifications are unfounded.

[Badawi] Mr. Sa'di Mahdi Salih, it has been noticed that differences surfaced during the recent Security Council debate on Iraq, especially among France, Russia, and the PRC on one hand and the United State and Britain on the other, and on the position to be adopted regarding the assessment of Iraq's efforts to handle and respond to the international resolutions. The Security Council's members differed. They were unable to agree on a statement praising Iraq, for example, for making progress regarding disarmament. How do you assess and interpret these differences, as well as the French, Russian, and PRC positions?

[Salih] The facts at present have imposed those differences because it is wrong to renew the blockade automatically and without any discussion or without considering Iraq's measures to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions. Here, any objective and fair person will certainly raise his voice and call for a pause to discuss the reason why they decide automatically, without discussion. Raising such a question will lead to differences between the two sides, because some want to renew the sanctions without giving convincing reasons and others call for discussing and seeing if the reasons that made them impose the blockade on Iraq are still there. The answer will be: No, none of the reasons are there. Therefore, there will be a demand for lifting the blockade. So, the United States and Britain are trying to prevent such a trend.

[Badawi] There have been Iraqi threats to take some certain measure if a settlement was not reached regarding the oil embargo on Baghdad, but Tariq 'Aziz did not disclose the nature of that measure. What do you mean by a certain measure, especially since your demand for lifting the oil embargo was not met?

[Salih] Let us ask any world state, whose people are placed under a comprehensive and firm blockade for four years, what it would do when it sees its people dying slowly in a genocide-like situation, when its officials and doctors see children dying before their eyes without being able to do anything because they do not have medicine, and when it sees its people hungry and their health affected. What would that state do in such a case? It will take measures to protect the people. We should not go too far to hint that we will launch a new war. No,

we will do our utmost to lift that blockade. Our forefathers said: Poverty amounts to infidelity. When people starve and are naked, they have the right to do everything.

If we have managed to restrain our people and prevent them from doing things that violate the international will, or can be considered a departure from the prevailing concepts, then I believe that if our people do something in the future, we will not be able to tell to them stop, as we did and continue to do.

[Badawi] In other words, is it possible to expect a popular Iraqi move?

[Salih] I cannot define a certain formula. This might happen on the spur of the moment. I cannot now define the formula by which we will respond to the injustice our people have suffered. However, the wronged have the right to do anything.

[Badawi] There is also the question of recognizing Kuwait, which was raised again during the debates. Tariq 'Aziz promised that if the embargo against Iraq is lifted, then Baghdad might reconsider its stand on Kuwait.

[Salih] In case the embargo is lifted, then everything can be discussed. Tariq 'Aziz's answer was clear. I have nothing to add to that answer.

[Badawi] How can the question of reconsidering the issue of Kuwait be interpreted? A final recognition of borders, for example?

[Salih] Until 2 August 1990, we considered Kuwait a state. We dealt with Amir Jabir as a head of state. During his meetings with Amir Jabir, President Saddam Husayn dealt with him as such. Therefore, when we accepted Resolution 660, I think that implicitly meant recognition. But, if we are asked, after all that happened to our people, to be lenient to our people's enemies— who insist on harming us—of course, this puts us in an embarrassing position. What will we tell our citizens if we keep silent when we see them or their family members die or get sick without finding medicine? What will we tell him? What will we do?

[Badawi] Mr. Sa'di Mahdi Salih, you are taking part in the Interparliamentary Union [IPU] meeting in Paris. In accordance with an IPU spokesman, a proposal to discuss a request to lift the economic sanctions against Iraq has been rejected. In your view, does this stand reflect the support of most international parliamentarians for the continued sanctions against Baghdad?

[Salih] After the disappearance of the role of the former Soviet Union, the world now is controlled by a sole superpower, the United States. Therefore, all that is prevailing in international politics does not reflect the true state of affairs. Some fear for their interests, and some even fear their own safety. Therefore, the real stands are unclear now. Yet, there is broad international sympathy for the Iraqi people. This is because the issue is a human issue. Besides, the proposal was an extra item. It was not a basic item. Therefore, it could be that...

[Badawi, interrupting] Yes, but it was rejected. Does this reflect a certain orientation, or are your contacts...

[Salih, interrupting] No, I do not think it reflects reality. For the first time, the proposal was put to the vote on the first day, while such a thing would usually happen three or four days after the opening of the conference. Of course, this seems to be a game by the presidency of the conference.

[Badawi] The presidency of the conference?

[Salih] The traditional presidency of the conference. I do not mean the French. The president, I believe, is British.

[Badawi] Contacts were recently noted between Baghdad and France, Russia, and even Turkey. Turkish President Demirel recently called for either toppling the Baghdad regime or permitting Ankara to play a role or embark on meditation between the Iraqi Government and the Kurds. What is your comment on this talk?

[Salih] We and Turkey are linked by old and broad relations. However, the Iraqi-Turkish relationship was affected by the Gulf war. As was the case with several other states, Turkey sustained much damage as a result of the blockade. We understand what Demirel meant. Demirel meant to say: Enough. You are wagering on the possibility that the Iraqi regime will fall due to the continued blockade, but this lengthy blockade has resulted in nothing to this effect, so you should lift the blockade.

[Badawi] Mr. Sa'di Mahdi Salih: The Turkish position was accompanied by information about Iraqi troop concentrations in northern Iraq and a plan to reopen the northern road leading to Turkey. Is this true?

[Salih] I have no such information.

[Badawi] Is there not an intention to reopen the Baghdad- Ankara road in order to facilitate exchanges, export, or import...

[Salih, interrupting] The Baghdad-Ankara road would have been open if hadn't been for the Hammer Force and for the U.S. and British interference that prevented free movement. This road is passable. There are no obstacles on it.

[Badawi] But, at present, this road lies in the Kurdish region ...

[Salih, interrupting] I believe, however, that if there was approval of movement, such movement would take place.

[Badawi] So, an international green light is awaited.

[Salih] Yes, we are awaiting the departure of the Hammer Force. It is illegitimate. This force represents

flagrant interference in the affairs of an independent state and a UN member state.

[Badawi] Within this context, Mas'ud Barzani has accused the Iraqi authorities of taking revenge on the Kurds for the extension of the economic embargo on Baghdad by halting fuel supplies to the Kurds.

[Salih] Iraq is besieged. We told you we suffer much due to this blockade, in many forms, including food, medicine, and fuel. There is strict rationing of all these materials. The Kurds receive their rations. But, if the Kurds compare their rations to the pre- war period, the rations will naturally seem very small. However, this is the ration Iraq can provide at this time. When the blockade of Iraq is lifted, you will find that the blockade on the Kurds will consequently and simultaneously be lifted.

[Badawi] Hence, this measure is linked to ...

[Salih, interrupting] It is linked to the main blockade [on Iraq].

[Badawi] So, Barzani is right.

[Salih] No, he is not right, because he accuses the Iraqi Government. But where can the Iraqi Government get additional rations? It cannot give to a Kurd twice the ration of an Arab. It gives the Kurd the ration mentioned in the ration card. We are not responsible for the Kurds' failure to control the disbursement and delivery process because we do not have any employees there. As a result of the interference in our internal affairs, we do not have any authority in that region. We deliver the supplies to certain points, and they receive them. If they do not deliver the supplies, it is their own responsibility. If they sell fuel to Iran for hard currency and dispose of fuel as individuals, it is their own responsibility.

[Badawi] It is reported that Iraqi oil is being exported to Pakistan and Afghanistan via Iran. How true is this?

[Salih, laughing] How can oil be exported across borders? You know oil is exported in pipelines and requires large investments before this can take place. This is not available at present.

[Badawi] Then, these reports are incorrect.

[Salih] Yes, incorrect.

[Badawi] Regarding the domestic situation, the opposition is talking about the expansion and exacerbation of tension, particularly on the security level, in Baghdad and elsewhere in Iraq.

[Salih] My answer to such utterances is that we welcome anyone, even the one who calls himself the opposition, who wants to find out or be sure of the true situation. The country is opening its doors to all—to newsmen, politicians, and parliamentarians—to see for themselves in full freedom and to become closely acquainted with the situation. I can say in advance that they will discover that what they said was wrong and does not represent the truth. Security is prevailing all over Iraq, except for the area outside state authority, which is called the Kurdish area. This area consists of the three Governorates of Dahuk, Irbil, and al-Sulaymaniyah.

[Badawi] What about the situation in the south?

[Salih] The situation in the south is no different from the situation in Baghdad. Both are the same. Stability is complete and overwhelming.

[Badawi] Mr. Sa'di Mahdi Salih: In the aftermath of the second Gulf war, promises were made that there would be reforms on the political level, toward democracy, pluralism, and so forth. Negotiations and dialogues were held with the Kurds. Afterward, we heard nothing in this regard. How long will the suspension of dialogue between authority and other political factions, including the opposition and others, continue?

[Salih] We embarked on what you termed political reform at the end of the war with Iran. We were expecting to implement all that was required by the end of 1990. This included the endorsement of a new constitution for the country through a referendum and the election of a National Assembly, a Shura Council, and the president of the state. These steps were expected to be taken at that stage. However, things happened. Now, the situation of Iraq is as follows: It is besieged. Part of its territory is in one way or another under the control of international forces, particularly the United States and Britain. Accordingly, these steps are now suspended, but not forever. We will implement them as soon as the present extraordinary circumstances come to a conclusion. Still, the National Assembly discussed and ratified a new party law, which is currently valid. Any Iraqis wishing to engage in politics, in Iraq or abroad, can apply according to this law. Thus, this is a pledge that was not imposed on us but stems from our creed, from our conviction that democracy is the right path to run the affairs of our country.

[Badawi] What about the federation proposal called for by the opposition factions as a final solution for the Iraqi issue?

[Salih] I think there was an answer that was also proposed during the dialogue: There is nothing beyond autonomy. We will not accept a formula beyond autonomy. We believe this autonomy fulfills the aspirations and demands of the Kurdish sons of our people. These people enjoyed these rights before their brothers in other countries—Turkey, Syria, and Iran—did. These countries did not give the Kurds what Iraq gave them. But it is the game of politics. Iraq wants to build a progressive, developed, and cultural system with a sound scientific method. Some international powers, however, do not want this. Therefore, problems are created. This is one of the problems that were first created by Britain and now pursued by the United States, to keep Iraq weak and backward.

[Badawi] A last word about the future. How do you view it from besieged Baghdad?

[Salih] The future is for Iraq. The present circumstances are extraordinary and temporary. The day will come when the world will discover it has wronged Iraq. Many will come to help Iraq continue its march because it pursues a sound course. The whole question is that we do not want anyone to interfere in our internal affairs. Therefore, we respect those who respect us and cooperate with them to the end. Iraqi-French relations and the previous Iraqi-Soviet relations, and Iraqi-Chinese relations, serve as good examples of this. We established good relations, even with the United States, but we are very sensitive to any interference in our internal affairs. I am sure that future is for Iraq.

[Badawi] Thank you, Mr. Sa'di Mahdi Salih, speaker of the Iraqi National Assembly.

[Salih] Thank you.

Foreign Minister on UN, Embargo, Other Issues

JN2603193194 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1820 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 26 Mar (INA)—Iraqi Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf has said Iraq is being subjected to something that has nothing to do with the issue of Kuwait or the implementation of UN resolutions. Instead, he said, it is a U.S.-led conspiracy with obvious political objectives.

Al-Sahhaf was addressing a news conference at Arab League headquarters today. It was attended by correspondents of Arab and world news agencies, television networks, and the press. Al-Sahhaf stressed that Iraq has fully cooperated with the United Nations and implemented its resolutions, especially Resolution 687. According to the mutual obligations outlined by this resolution, especially Paragraph 22, al-Sahhaf noted, the United Nations is supposed to unconditionally lift the blockade imposed on Iraq.

Noting the allegations and charges about the issue of Iraqi weapons, al-Sahhaf said: At present, Iraq does not possess any banned weapons. Iraq is completely free of the weapons covered by Resolution 687. Recalling the UN Special Commission's reports and confessions, al-Sahhaf said Iraq cooperated with the inspection committees and approved the long-term monitoring programs in order to expedite the lifting of the blockade imposed on its people.

In this regard, Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf pointed out the major shift in the positions of many UN Security Council members in light of Iraq's great response and major strides in terms of commitment to and implementation of UN resolutions.

He said the UN Security Council's debates and sanctions review during its recent meeting saw a major shift in the positions of most of its members in favor of Iraq. He said France, China, and Russia—in addition to nonpermanent member states of the UN Security Council, such as Brazil, Rwanda, Oman, and Spain—demand that the blockade be lifted.

He expressed extreme regret that international resolutions continue to be drafted under U.S. influence, and that the U.S. Administration continues to besiege Iraq despite the far-reaching effects on society's public health, especially among children and women. He said that under U.S. influence, the Security Council has decided to maintain the sanctions, something intended to humiliate and annihilate the Iraqi people.

The foreign minister drew the attention of public opinion and the international community to the depth and seriousness of the crime perpetrated against the Iraqi people. He said the continuing freeze on Iraqi assets at Western banks and establishments robbed Iraq of the opportunity to employ the international resolution to use these assets to import food and medicine.

The minister stressed the fact that this reflects the illegal criminal and hostile campaign of annihilation waged against Iraq by well-known international powers. This has no precedence in history. He said: Reports by international bodies, the World Health Organization, and UNICEF clearly point out the crimes perpetrated against Iraq.

The minister refuted the Kuwaiti regime's lies and its claims about so-called missing Kuwaitis. He reemphasized that there are no Kuwaitis in Iraq. He said: Iraq has cooperated in a positive way with the Red Cross and the Arab League about this issue.

The foreign minister accused the al-Sabah family of continuing to exploit the aggressive U.S. position, instigating public opinion against Iraq, and preventing the lifting of the embargo against the Iraqi people by creating the lie about missing Kuwaitis.

Reinforcing his argument, al-Sahhaf said: The Kuwaiti regime has not responded to or agreed with all the Arab initiatives, including Gulf initiatives, intended to close the book on these allegations used to injure Iraq.

Focusing on relations between Iraq and the Gulf states, al-Sahhaf said: We follow a constant policy based on principles of promoting cooperation and activating ties with Arab countries . He stressed Iraq's permanent readiness to sincerely cooperate with the Arab group to serve Arab causes. He said: We now have good relations with Qatar, Oman, Bahrain and other brothers.

Touching on the issue of Arab reconciliation, al-Sahhaf said: Iraq supports every Arab effort to effect solidarity. He said such efforts and intentions should be based on the principle of preserving pan-Arab security and confronting threats directed at Iraq and the Arab nation, indicating in this regard Iraq's previous positions on this issue, particularly the pan-Arab declaration of President Saddam Husayn in August 1980.

Warning the Arab nation against the gravity of the U.S.-Zionist scheme against it, al-Sahhaf said: Those intentions are not aimed just against Iraq. Rather, the imperialist-Zionist scheme targets all Arab countries and seeks to incite direct and indirect problems in them.

The minister shed light on the aggressive U.S. practices designed to dismantle Iraq and harm its national sovereignty. He said the air exclusion zones in southern and northern Iraq are nothing but a U.S. plot, drafted in the form of a resolution, that contravenes UN Security Council resolutions. This has been admitted by UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali, he noted.

He explained that from the time the no-fly zone was imposed in southern Iraq to the end of last year, U.S. and British aircraft carried out over 25,535 violations of Iraqi airspace in the south, using bases and facilities provided by the Saudi and Kuwaiti regimes.

Touching on imperialist-Zionist interference in northern Iraq, Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf said the central government had been about to sign an agreement with Kurdish parties to promote self-rule. However, the U.S. Administration, as acknowledged by Barzani, prevented those parties from signing the agreement, which was in the interest of the Kurds of Iraq in the first place.

Al-Sahhaf accused Washington, Tel Aviv, and Arab parties, including the al-Sabah family, of conspiring against Iraq and supporting some gangs in northern Iraq in order to ensure the continuation of the abnormal situation there and to partition Iraq. He stressed that Iraqis are aware of the objectives of these schemes, and are very prepared to confront them.

The minister described the domestic situation in Iraq as very excellent. He said rumors propagated against Iraq are nothing but exposed and explicit propaganda campaigns pushed by the United States and other hostile parties.

Radio Reports French Statement on Iraqi-French Oil Contacts

JN2803074194 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 0400 GMT 28 Mar 94

[Text] A spokesman for the French Foreign Ministry said the signing of agreements between Iraq and two French oil companies is a matter that only concerns the two companies.

Commenting on contacts between Iraq and the French companies last Friday, French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe told a news conference that he would like to have a list of companies from other countries that have the same contacts with the Iraqi Government—a reference to the U.S., British, and other Western companies.

Minister of Oil Safa' Hadi Jawad emphasized in a statement, published in AL-QADISIYAH last Saturday, that several major international oil companies have shown a strong desire to sign contracts with Iraq.

He said negotiations with French oil companies in Paris resulted in agreements that will be implemented after the siege is lifted.

Oil Minister on Cooperation With International Oil Firms

JN2603113694 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0730 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Text] Baghdad, 26 Mar (INA)—Oil Minister Dr. Safa' Hadi Jawad has said that a number of leading U.S., Canadian, British, Brazilian, and Spanish oil companies have expressed a strong desire to conclude contracts with Iraq and to cooperate with it in the field of oil production.

In an interview with the newspaper AL-QADISIYAH published here today, the minister said that these international companies, which play a great and effective role in their countries' governments, seek to reemploy their expertise and investments in our oil industry despite the continuation of the blockade imposed on Iraq.

He said that there is another group of oil companies that seek to improve and promote their relations with Iraq, and that they seek to seize the appropriate opportunity to hold contacts and talks with Iraq in order to reach a specific agreement or to conclude contracts to develop their investments after the blockade is lifted.

The oil minister said: Negotiations with the international oil companies have taken place not only in Baghdad, but also in other world capitals, including Amman and Vienna. He stressed that the negotiations with the French oil companies, which were recently held in Paris, resulted in agreements that will be implemented after the blockade is lifted.

He emphasized that the continuation of the blockade not only affects Iraq and its people, but it is now affecting the neighboring states and other states with interests in Iraq. These states have begun to feel the grave damage inflicted on their economies. He added that Turkey is now suffering from a serious economic crisis after the stoppage of the Iraqi-Turkish pipeline, and after banning the crude oil exports through this line to Turkey and then to other ports. He said that reoperating this line will secure jobs for thousands of Turkish workers.

Oil Minister Safa' Hadi Jawad added: The closure of the Iraqi- Turkish oil pipeline has led to the deterioration of the economic situation in the Anatolia region and the Turkish ports, to the growth of unemployment rates, and to the deterioration of the security situation in the region.

He noted: As a result of these problems and obstacles, Turkey began to pressure the UN Security Council to allow the reopening of the Iraqi-Turkish pipeline, which will reactivate trade between the two countries using 1,000 trucks per day to transport goods.

The oil minister pointed out that Iraq's current production of crude oil falls within the limits of 550,000-600,000 barrels per day to meet the local needs for oil byproducts. He said that important explorations have been undertaken in the central and western regions of Iraq, and that previously-discovered oil fields have also been developed.

IRNA Cites Opposition Radio on Missing 'Classified' Discs

LD2703154694 Tehran IRNA in English 1510 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Tehran, March 27, IRNA—Loss of floppy diskettes containing vital classified information has terrified the Iraqi regime, according to radio 'Voice of the Iraqi People', monitored here today.

The radio said Iraq security forces have started inspecting houses of hundreds of persons suspected of removing the diskettes, and have arrested a number of employees of related departments.

It has not yet been clarified what data the diskettes contained, but the way the Iraqi regime is treating the suspects, the radio said it is likely that they might contain vital security information.

What's more concerning for the regime is that foreign embassies in Baghdad can get access to the diskettes.

The radio added that broadcast of the classified information contained in the diskettes by internationl radio stations might also be critical for the Iraqi regime.

Voice of the Iraqi People is an opposition radio operating from somewhere inside Iraq. It did not give further details.

Opposition Leader: People 'Poised to Pounce' on Weak Regime

JN2503201694 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1730 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Interview with Ahmad al-Jalabi, president of the Executive Council of the opposition Iraqi National Conference by Salim Badawi; date and place not given; from "The Event" program—recorded]

[Text] [Al-Jalabi] With Saddam still in office, the sanctions cannot be lifted. Relief for the Iraqi people lies in the implementation of Resolutions 706 and 712. The international community has no confidence in the Iraqi regime or its compliance with resolutions.

[Badawi] Don't you agree, though, that the only party being hurt is the Iraqi people, of which you are a part, rather than the regime? Do you continue to hold that retaining the sanctions will topple the regime?

[Al-Jalabi] The Iraqi people will not benefit from lifting the sanctions. The regime will use the ensuing income to purchase weapons and new tools of repression. Only the regime will benefit from lifting the sanctions.

[Badawi] There has been a relative and limited shift in the positions of certain major powers like France and Russia toward the Baghdad regime. How do you feel about that?

[Al-Jalabi] France and Russia seem to be misreading the situation. Russia seems to think that scrapping the sanctions will bring in money Iraq can use to pay the huge military debt it owes Moscow. As for France, important commercial interests there want drilling concessions in the Majnun oil field. These interests think extending support to Saddam at this point will help him survive, and then they will be in a position to clinch the oil drilling contracts. They are influencing their government. We think their influence is extremely limited.

[Badawi] If the Iraqi regime can capitalize on some positive shifts by certain world powers, you, as an opposition, will benefit as well. There are reports you receive financial support from abroad, especially from regional powers opposed to the Iraqi regime. Don't you think such an attitude makes you less credible as a patriotic opposition?

[Al-Jalabi] Saddam [words indistinct] and destroyed the Iraqi people's independent movement. We set up offices and we are working from inside Iraq. We have moved the opposition from exile onto Iraqi territory, where we are engaged in real, democratic, and open political action. We believe our credibility with the Iraqi people is strong. As for the reports about financial backing, I have no comment, you are not being specific.

[Badawi] In light of the present situation in Iraq, how do you see the country's political landscape developing?

[Al-Jalabi] The Iraqi regime is now progressively losing all the requirements of a proper state. The regime is abdicating state functions, like securing food, protection and safety for the population. Thefts are rife, as are murders. The regime is doing nothing about them. The regime is growing weaker and weaker, and the people are poised to pounce on it. We are now mobilizing our resources to promote that end.

[Badawi] Thank you, Mr. al-Jalabi.

[Al-Jalabi] Thank you.

Military Division Reportedly Deployed in Karkuk 18, 19 Mar

JN2503171794 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan in Arabic 1530 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Text] According to reports received from special sources, the chauvinistic Baghdad regime deployed a military division inside Karkuk on 18 and 19 March, fearing an explosion of popular outrage in the city,

especially during the days commemorating the anniversary of the liberation of this beloved Kurdish city and the Nowruz celebrations.

In their patrols of the streets and alleys of Karkuk, the regime's discipline men stand fully prepared and [words indistinct] to suppress any popular move in the city. The regime troops also searched the shops of Kurds in the city and caused many troubles for their owners.

Troops Reportedly Massing for New Attacks in Marshes

NC2603152794 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Text] Our sources in the south expect tyrant Saddam's troops to launch a new attack against villages and populated areas on the [word indistinct) River, which extends from al-Qurnah district in al-Basrah Governorate to the (al-'Izar) area in the marshes of al- 'Amarah Governorate.

In a report from the marshes, our sources note that the regime has massed many troops, including armored and artillery units, in preparation for the attack. The same sources add that the regime has beefed up its forces by sending units from the Republican Guards, the emergency forces [quwat al-tawari'], large elements from the security and intelligence services, and units from the so-called Popular Army, which has been reestablished to confront popular protests against the regime.

17-24 Mar Airspace 'Violations' Protested to Arab League

JN2803093994 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0835 GMT 28 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 28 Mar (INA)—Iraq has informed the Arab League that the rulers of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait continued to offer facilities to U.S., British, and French aircraft to violate Iraqi airspace, noting that this seriously jeopardizes Iraq's security, sovereignty, and national unity.

In a message addressed to the league's secretary general, the Iraqi permanent representative to the Arab League said these aircraft carried out 321 hostile air sorties, flying from bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait on 17-24 March.

A list attached to the letter detailed the airspace violations.

Iraqi Forces Reportedly Shell Residential Area

NC2703162094 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1500 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] The Iraqi regime forces located in the (Bani Maqan) area bombarded a residential area in Chamchamal Governorate in the evening on 26 March, using mortars and machine guns. The Iraqi forces shelled the Bawaji area in the same region again this morning. The bombardment caused heavy property damage.

Two UN Guards Wounded in Ambush; Government Blamed

NC2703154294 Paris AFP in English 1356 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Zakho, Iraq, March 27, (AFP)—Two Austrian UN guards were wounded, one of them seriously, when gunmen ambushed a bus they were travelling in Sunday [27 March] near Irbil in Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq, UN sources said.

The United Nations was trying to evacuate the wounded guards, said the officials in Zakho near the Turkish border.

The Austrians were in a bus taking 22 UN guards from Irbil to Baghdad at the end of their tour of duty. The guards are employed to protect UN personnel and vehicles.

UN organisations have been working in the Kurdish-controlled region of northern Iraq since the Kurdish uprising against Baghdad which followed the January-February 1991 Gulf war.

Since 1992 UN personnel and offices in the region have been repeatedly attacked.

The Kurdish authorities blamed agents of the Iraqi government.

Baghdad has warned several times that it will not tolerate foreigners carrying out humanitarian work in the north of the country.

There have been 11 attacks this year, nine against the UN, one against a German humanitarian organisation and one against Swedish journalists, the UN's Inter-Agency Relief Coordination Unit reported. It said six people were injured but none killed.

Paper Denounces Clinton's Remarks on Jerusalem

JN2603133294 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0810 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Text] Baghdad, 26 Mar (INA)—The newspaper AL-'IRAQ has denounced U.S. President Bill Clinton's recent statements in which he announced before the leaders of Jewish organizations in the United States that he and his government consider Jerusalem as the united capital of the Zionist entity.

In an article today, the paper notes: During his election campaign, Clinton competed with his predecessor George Bush to win Zionist votes by pledging never to forsake the Zionist entity.

The paper points out that this pledge included Clinton's readiness to support the Zionist entity by giving it loans and grants to finance the establishment of settlements in the occupied West Bank, and assurances that the Zionists will not find a better friend at times of war or peace.

The paper reviews some of Clinton's actions after he won the presidential elections. The most important of these actions are his disavowal of the statement in which he expressed his readiness to turn over a new leaf in relations with Iraq if Iraq complied with the UN Security Council resolutions, his missile attack on Baghdad, and the current scandals in which he and his family are involved.

The paper notes that the campaign against Clinton's reputation by the Republicans and certain Zionists is due to the fact that these circles are not satisfied with the White House President merely announcing openly that he supports the Zionist entity, they want him to prove, through words and deeds, that he will pursue this course, and show that any deviation from this course will result in blackmailing and exposing him, making him a lesson to others.

Rabin Views Syrian Track, Cairo Talks

TA2603120594 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0800 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Interview with Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin by 'Adi Talmor, at the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem on 25 March; from the weekly "In the Current Situation" program—recorded]

[Text] [Talmor] Good day and a happy Passover to Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin.

[Rabin] Good day and a happy holiday to all the Israeli people.

[Talmor] Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad is undoubtedly no al-Sadat or Mubarak. Are you convinced that he really seeks a full peace agreement with Israel or is he just pretending to want peace in order to secure U.S. economic aid?

[Rabin] First of all, it is my pleasant duty to recall the past 15 years, which have proven that it is possible to achieve a lasting peace with a large, leading Arab country like Egypt even in a region as turbulent as the Middle East. I telephoned Egyptian President Mubarak yesterday. I expressed my appreciation and gratitude to Egypt for signing the peace agreement and for proving its ability to adhere to it. The Egyptian president said he was happy that I called and said that Egypt and Israel had set an example on how to overcome past hatreds and build a viable peace. Mubarak expressed the hope at this stage that Israel and the other countries engaged in the peace process would attain the same accomplishment.

I hope and believe, in light of the fact that the talks in Cairo ended yesterday on a positive note and will resume in Cairo next Tuesday [29 March], that we will first of all overcome the issue of security arrangements for the Palestinians in Hebron and then of course continue the negotiations to reach agreement on the implementation of Gaza-Jericho First, in order to show the world that it is possible to reach agreements and to implement them. I hope that the agreement's implementation will help change facts on the ground, at least in those areas where it will take effect in the initial stage. I therefore have faith in the future.

Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon have already agreed to resume the Washington talks at the end of April. I also believe that the talks will take a somewhat different form. There will no longer be algebraic-like formulas defining what constitutes peace and what constitutes withdrawal, but rather a far more comprehensive view of peace and withdrawal as packages, withdrawal in stages without committing oneself to a final line, and of course security arrangements and the subsequent U.S. aid.

[Talmor] You may have your faith, Sir, but in south Lebanon only this week there were serious terrorist attacks in which Katyusha rockets were fired at Israel. The same al-Asad you pin so many hopes on was supposed to stop this.

[Rabin] There is no doubt that just as you mentioned earlier, al-Asad is no al-Sadat. Al-Asad has a different approach which makes progress in the peace process more difficult. The State of Israel and its people are democratic. The Israeli public has to be convinced that the Arab leader it is negotiating with really means peace and is willing to hold public meetings at the most senior levels....

[Talmor, interrupting] And this is not happening.

[Rabin] At this stage of the negotiations with Syria, only relatively low-level contacts have been held. If this does not change at some stage—if higher-level contacts are not held, if the Syrian media does not show greater openness, if Syrian leaders do not issue clearer public statements on their intention to reach peace—it will be very difficult to make progress in the negotiations. Clearly, and as a further projection of this, Syria also has the capability to keep things quiet along Israel's northern border.

[Talmor] Why did Israel not come out with a more vigorous and aggressive reaction to this week's Katyusha attacks against the Israeli border and even against areas inside Israel?

[Rabin] First of all, we did react. Last week's Katyusha firing was an exception because there are understandings which are basically kept. According to these understandings, no Katyushas are to be fired at Israel's northern border settlements.

[Talmor] But the Katyushas could have fallen on Israeli settlements?

[Rabin] Nothing can be hermetically sealed. In general, the residents of the northern settlements along the Lebanese border live in greater security and tranquility today than they did before July 1993. I am sure that this Passover, tens of thousands of Israelis will safely spend their holiday in the Galilee.

[Talmor] Mr. Rabin, you mentioned the telephone conversation you held with President Mubarak to mark 15 years of peace. Does Mubarak's regime appear stable from Jerusalem's perspective. Is there no danger of an Islamic revolution similar to the one which swept Iran?

[Rabin] I think that the Egyptian reality is completely different than that of Iran although a terroristic, radical, Islamic movement exists there as well. I believe that the majority of the Egyptian people support President Mubarak's regime, would like to see continued economic development, and do not exhibit any leaning toward the Iranian brand of nationalistic or religious-nationalistic extremism. Terrorist attacks are carried out here and there. That, regrettably, is a part of Arab society and the Islamic world. Terrorism is a fact of life in most of the neighboring countries as well as in more distant ones.

I have confidence in the strength of President Mubarak's government and have no doubt that he adheres to his comprehensive policy of both encouraging peace and

extending Egypt's assistance to Israel and to its Arab interlocutors in reaching peace. We see this for a fact: most of the recent contacts have taken place in Cairo or at other Egyptian locations.

[Talmor] This interview is taking place immediately following the return of the Israeli delegation from Cairo. Now that you have been briefed and held consultations, can you tell us what the Palestinians will ultimately receive in return for their agreement to continue the talks in Cairo next Tuesday? Will Hebron be awarded an almost equal status to that of Jericho and Gaza?

[Rabin] No, Hebron will not be given a similar status to neither Gaza nor Jericho. Nevertheless, I cannot ignore the horrendous massacre which took place at the Cave of the Patriarchs. I cannot ignore the fact that we have been keeping Hebron under curfew for almost one month in order to prevent friction between the approximately 120,000 Arab residents of Hebron and the 415 Israeli Jews who live there, whether as permanent residents or as students at the Shavey Hebron Yeshiva. This state of affairs is unacceptable and I am talking as a Jew and an Israeli. It is totally unacceptable that the Palestinians be the ones to suffer on account of this despicable massacre, which was committed by a Jewish criminal. At the same time, I want to make sure that the war against the enemies of peace, such as Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and the Islamic Jihad, will continue full blast. Even while our delegation was sitting down with the PLO representatives in Cairo, we did not hesitate to carry out an operation which led to the elimination of at least three Hamas terrorists who had participated in the murder of Jews and were continuing to plan additional murders.

We will guarantee the security of the Israelis living in Hebron but it is difficult to explain to the world and to ourselves why the burden for this despicable massacre in the Cave of the Patriarchs should fall, and has fallen for the past month, on the 100,000 Arab residents of Hebron. Therefore, we must offer reasonable security arrangements for the Palestinian residents of Hebron. We agreed to a temporary international presence in Hebron, which will help the town return to normal life and report to the Palestinian-Israeli liaison committee, the mayor, and to the military governor.

[Talmor] Do you not fear that Hebron may set a precedent for subsequent Palestinian demands in Nabulus and other cities?

[Rabin] I believe that what happened in the Cave of the Patriarchs was really a despicable, murderous, aberration, which will not be repeated. Therefore, there will be no need for such a precedent.

[Talmor] Is Israel still considering moving all the Jewish settlers in Hebron to one location or perhaps even evacuating the Jews from the town?

[Rabin] I do not think that at this stage we, or at least I, have any intention of evacuating the Jews living in Hebron. All the rest is not an issue for public statements. This is an Israeli decision which should not fall within the framework of returning life to normal in Hebron or resuming the negotiations on the implementation of the Gaza-Jericho First agreement.

[Talmor] Any discussion of the Hebron massacre inevitably leads us to the state commission of inquiry investigating it. In your opinion, Mr. Rabin, how has the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and the defense establishment portrayed themselves so far in the state commission's hearings?

[Rabin] At this stage, I do not intend to discuss issues being discussed in detail by the commission. A state commission, made up of distinguished and experienced people, has been established, and I am sure that it will do the kind of job expected from such a commission and present its recommendations to the government. Then I will be able to comment. Right now, I would like to merely state in general that the IDF is the sovereign body in the territories on behalf of the Israeli Government. Ever since the inception of the intifadah, the IDF has been facing challenges it never had to face before. Seven years have passed and it has learned to handle these challenges. It has had to enforce law and order under the special circumstances of a civil uprising by the Palestinians in the territories against the Army. This is not an easy task. Elsewhere in the world, armies are not usually employed for this kind of job, which is mainly police work in addition to confronting terrorist squads. I do not believe that any other army in the world would have met this challenge while retaining its moral caliber, the values of the IDF, and the authentic values of the Jewish people—not those of the murderer from Qiryat Arba'. I admit that mistakes have been made and mishaps have occurred. I am talking about widespread activities, day and night, 365 days a year for over seven years. Hundreds of thousands of IDF soldiers have served dutifully despite all the difficulties. I have nothing but praise for the IDF.

[Talmor] Sir, you are probably aware that the public believes that the commission could ultimately find you, as defense minister, responsible for what happened in Hebron and perhaps even topple the government.

[Rabin] As prime minister and defense minister I bear ministerial responsibility for whatever happens in the framework of my duties. I am talking about responsibility in the correct sense of the word. I am not responsible for every slip-up by a sentry, battalion commander, or even brigade commander—if the appropriate orders had indeed been issued in a timely fashion. Not everything falls under the framework of collective responsibility and I believe that what you described earlier will not come to pass.

(Talmor] Yitzhaq Rabin, prime minister and defense minister, thank you very much and a happy holiday.

[Rabin] Happy holidays. I would like to use this opportunity to express my thanks, appreciation, and holiday

greetings to the IDF soldiers, the Border Police, the Israeli police, and to all those who guarantee the security of Israel's civilians.

Peres on Settlers, 'New Situation' in Region

TA2703205594 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1900 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Interview with Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres by political correspondent Gadi Sukenik "this evening"; place not given—recorded]

[Text] [Sukenik] Mr. Peres, are you convinced that deliberations with the PLO will resume, and intensively so, on Tuesday [29 March], in preparation for the beginning of the withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho?

[Peres] Barring unexpected developments, the answer is yes.

[Sukenik] What will take place then? Roughly speaking, when can the withdrawal start and when can it end?

[Peres] If the negotiations start tomorrow [as heard] indeed, we may be very near the first objective, namely, the first half of April. Still, if there are further delays....[pauses] Look there is a certain paradox here: On the one hand, the PLO tells us to keep the timetable, but on the other hand, it does not begin on time. We cannot finish on time if we do not start on schedule.

[Sukenik] You know that the PLO points to security problems in Hebron and to the Jewish core in the heart of Hebron in explaining the various delays. You and Mr. Rabin repeatedly declare that a decision on their evacuation is ours only, regardless of the negotiations. Were you in a position to do so, would you now decide on the evacuation of some of these Jews at least?

[Peres] Look, I would take care of security in the largest sense of the word. This is not a personal matter. What happened in Hebron following the Cave of the Patriarchs incident is that the chance for peaceful coexistence between the settlers and the Arab residents was severely wounded if not killed completely. It will take a very long time for the wounds to heal. The settlers said they can have peaceful coexistence, but this is not the case today. We cannot reach unreasonable absurdities: place 120,000 Arab residents under curfew in order to defend 400 Jews who live there.

[Sukenik] What is the conclusion then?

[Peres] We need to reach appropriate conclusions about deployment in Hebron, from the civilian as well as the military viewpoint.

[Sukenik] Can we assume that Tall al-Rumaythah and Netzarim are the first settlements whose moment of truth is drawing nearer?

[Peres] I will not say a word on this. I would only say that there are large military shoulders carrying a very heavy burden. Still, civilian shoulders must share the burden. It is impossible to defend everything with pistols or guns or an army. We must radically change the situation and cannot avoid this. Today I heard of the slogan "All Israel Is Hebron." Let me react to this in simple terms: The fate of Israel will not be determined by the Hebron residents only. In contrast, the fate of Hebron will be decided by the majority in Israel. We may have different views among us, but the fashion in which a decision is made must be acceptable to all, without exception. In arguments there is no trigger, gun, or knife; there are only arguments in favor or against, and the majority can decide. We have reached a very sensitive situation on this matter. You saw a Jew getting up during the holiday and shooting an Arab driver in revenge. People use their arms as they please, and this is unacceptable to us.

[Sukenik] Coexistence in Hebron is impossible then, in your opinion?

[Peres] It is impossible at this stage. I believe the day may come when coexistence will be possible, but tension has reached its highest point today, and military measures are necessary. In general, we will not abandon anybody, neither a settler, nor any Arab resident of Hebron. Still, searching must be an overall thing, not just military.

[Sukenik] It is impossible not to ask a short question on the Syrian issue. In your opinion, does the nation support the Golan cause indeed?

[Peres] Many people who say we must not get off the Golan also say we must not give peace up, and everybody understands that the two are closely interrelated. The Syrians have now taken a step which the Americans greatly appreciate; it is quite a wise step on their part. It is they who accepted President Clinton's invitation to return to the negotiations in Washington. This move binds the PLO too, naturally; the PLO cannot stay out of the picture. I think that in contrast with a certain hesitancy in Jordan, in contrast with the difficulties we are facing with the Palestinians....[pauses] I believe, incidentally, that we are getting back on track, that within several weeks we will have a new situation in the Middle East: For the first time, there will be a piece of Palestinian reality which will be seen and felt, and, thank God, we will be able to say goodbye to Gaza. Goodbye to Gaza means peace for Israel without Gaza. I think it is possible to get on this track and that we should get on a track of very serious negotiations with the Syrians.

Beilin Interviewed on Talks With Palestinians

TA2803115594 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 28 Mar 94

[Telephone interview with Deputy Foreign Minister Yosi Beilin by Karmit Gay and political correspondent Shlomo Raz; place not given—live]

[Excerpts] [Gay] What will we be bringing to the talks due to be resumed tomorrow?

[Beilin] Are you referring to the Hebron deployment?

[Gay] No, I mean in general.

[Beilin] Look, I think we are very, very close to a solution to the issues of an international presence and of a token Palestinian police in Hebron, as well as the whole issue of the Gaza and Jericho agreement. I hope that tomorrow, or even by tomorrow, we will be able to resolve the insignificant differences on numbers between us and the Palestinians. We have agreed on who they will report to but not on the numbers. We will resume the talks on Gaza and Jericho with great intensity. I agree with your reporters' assessments that there is a very profound mutual interest in attending the talks and completing them as soon as possible, and with the sides sharing such an interest, I assume the talks can be completed and the implementation of the agreement can begin.

[Gay] Before we address the details of the remaining open issues, I would like to ask you about Yasir 'Arafat's distress. Will Israel meet him half way in order to help him out of his predicament, or at least to improve his position?

[Beilin] Helping 'Arafat or the PLO out of a predicament is not part of our goal. We are interested in achieving an agreement best suiting our national needs. In this sense, exiting from Gaza is most definitely a supreme national priority for us. By the way, I think the weakness of 'Arafat or the organization he heads will end as soon as the agreement is implemented, as soon as a serious Palestinian police is deployed, as soon as the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] leaves Gaza and Jericho, when for the first time in Palestinian history, they are able to show a tangible change, rather than just slogans. When that happens, the domestic Palestinian condition will also change. [passage omitted]

[Gay] Let us now address the details. We have forgotten the two issues which preoccupied us before the Hebron massacre: the size of Gaza and Jericho; the status of settlements and settler security. Have we really forgotten these issues, or have they perhaps been solved?

[Beilin] They may have been forgotten by some, but that does not mean they no longer exist. The problems which preoccupied us are still there, but we have to remember that most of the main problems were resolved in the 'Arafat-Peres meeting in Cairo. What it means is that there are no more outstanding central, or rather substantive, problems, with the exception of one or two which will have to be discussed. There are many issues, particularly in the sphere of economics—such as currency and the customs system—which require detailed discussions, and that will definitely take time. There is a technical difficulty which must not be overlooked: The sides have yet to write the agreement they intend to sign, and it will be probably one of the most voluminous agreements we have ever seen, because while it does not deal with the permanent arrangement, it addresses so many details that it cannot be agreed on and written in a day. Its completion will require a very intensive effort for several weeks.

[Raz] But, Deputy Minister Beilin, political sources in Jerusalem have been saying with near-certainty that the agreement will be completed by 12 April. Is it possible that we are squeezing ourselves into such a tight timetable that we will be forced to make concessions merely because of our desire to wrap it up by then?

[Beilin] No, we will not make concessions on any substantive or even technical matter. We will simply have to work more intensely than we would have had there been no massacre, which put everything off by a month. This means that physically, we will have to work day and night in order to reach an agreement. We will have to negotiate without pause. These are extremely complex negotiations involving dozens of people. They will all take place in Cairo, and they will have to be pursued until everything is finalized.

[Raz] I have been told that the most complex part on the agenda is the so-called legal chapter. Where will it lead? Are we talking about legislative powers and the power to detain people—namely, things beyond autonomy?

[Beilin] No, no. Everything is definitely within the parameters of autonomy. We have absolutely no intention to go anywhere beyond the Oslo agreement and the jurisdiction of autonomy. We must not forget, however, that in Oslo, we discussed principles, and not how things would look on the ground.

By the way, we are indeed close to an agreement; I do not think that is the main problem. I think there are unresolved economic issues—mainly the problem of whether the territories and Israel will belong to the same customs system; that will have to be discussed at length. As I have said, there is still no written agreement, and that will have to be done.

[Gay] I think you are leaving for Oman this week.

[Beilin] No, I will travel to Oman on 17 April. It will be the first multilateral session in a Gulf state. This particular session will address the water issue, and I will head our delegation. [passage omitted]

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English at 1130 GMT on 28 March carries a report by Dick Winter on an interview he conducted with Beilin today. Winter points out that "Beilin, a member of the dovish wing of the Labor party, says he opposes uprooting the Jewish settlement in Hebron, adding that the status quo should be preserved in the city for the next five years."]

Minister Aloni on Golan, Syria

TA2803122394 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 28 Mar 94

[Text] Minister Shulamit Aloni says the people of Israel must adjust to the idea that they will have to be separated from the Golan, because it is Syrian land. She

made these remarks during the inaugural broadcast of Qol Yisra'el's Qol Kineret radio station.

Minister Sarid: Gaps Still Exist in Talks

TA2503131294 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1105 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Report by political correspondent Shlomo Raz in Tel Aviv]

[Text] This morning's cautious optimism about the Cairo talks has not changed even after the negotiating team reported to a meeting at the prime minister's bureau. The team reported on the progress made—although no agreements were reached—on what is called security in the territories, or more to the point, the observers and Palestinian police force in Hebron. The following agreements are being worked on: About 100 Norwegians will be deployed as an observer force. They will be armed with revolvers. The Palestinian force will apparently be made up of several dozen policemen, which will belong to the Hebron Municipality and be linked to the Palestinian police force to be set up in Jericho and the Gaza Strip, while operationally it will be subordinate to the IDF [Israel Defense Forces]. This is the deal being worked out. One of those who participated in this morning's meeting is Minister Yosi Sarid who is on the telephone with us.

[Raz] There is talk of restrained optimism. Can you tell us on what we should be optimistic and on what pessimistic?

[Sarid] Not only can I not expand, but I do not want to. In fact, I even wish to minimize. I think all the figures being mentioned are very imprecise, and I do not think it is proper to make a commitment about a figure. There are still differences between our position and that of the Palestinians. We will now try to bridge the gaps, but I would not like to mention a figure. I recommend treating any figure mentioned with circumspection.

[Raz] Minister Sarid, is the problem one of figures, since I believe that the understandings being worked out refer to about 100 Norwegian observers and several dozen Palestinian policemen.

[Sarid] I do not want to go into that because I do not think we should go into numbers, since as I have already said that figure is so imprecise.

[Raz] Is the problem one of numbers while the principle of deploying observers and a Palestinian police in Hebron has been agreed on?

[Sarid] I think Israel has already agreed to a Palestinian urban police force. We still have many problems relating to its size, powers, and to whom it will report, that still have to be resolved. The same is true about the international presence. I think that in principle the matter is agreed on, but there are issues which still have to be resolved.

[Raz] What was the mood of the Palestinians you met? Are they still trying to dictate to us terms for the resumption of the autonomy talks?

[Sarid] First, I did not meet them, therefore I cannot say, but I think that based on the report we received from the Israeli delegation, we got the impression that there were deep deliberations. I do not think that any ultimatum was issued. What is perhaps important to note is that both sides appear committed to continuing the process and that they want to make progress since both understand it is vital in the present situation.

[Raz] Was it hinted to them in some, as reported by one of the newspapers, that the Jewish settlement in Tall al-Rumaythah will be uprooted immediately after Passover?

[Sarid] Nothing like that was hinted to them. I reiterate, if the Israeli Government one day makes a decision on the relocation of the Jewish settlement in Hebron it will do so totally unrelated to the negotiations with the PLO and to any PLO demands. It will be an independent decision by the Israeli Government based on clear-cut security reasons.

[Raz] Minister Sarid, this morning Foreign Minister Peres said that assuming the Gaza-Jericho talks open in Cairo, they can be completed within two to three weeks. Does that assumption remain intact following the consultations at the prime minister's bureau?

[Sarid] I usually support the foreign minister's evaluation. I believe that in addition to both sides being committed to the negotiations, there is also a desire by both to speed them up and complete them as soon as possible while remaining as loyal as possible to the original dates in the Declaration of Principles [DOP]. As is known, due to what happened in Hebron, time was lost, therefore it is difficult to assume we will totally meet the original dates, but they will hopefully be as close as possible to the date in the DOP.

[Raz] Does that means that the withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho will start in the first third of April?

[Sarid] I do not want to make a commitment about any specific date; I think that would be wrong. We always know there can be unanticipated events. I said, and I am prepared to say so again, that whoever views late May as the date when the implementation of the DOP can take place, will not be far off, but that is merely an assumption.

[Raz] One more question. Minister Sarid, after Sunday's cabinet meeting you said that the time is drawing near when a decision will have to be made about evacuating Hebron since otherwise the whole country will go up in flames. Are we drawing close to that date?

[Sarid] That is my personal view. I do not think we can put off for long decisions which have to be made, but they have to be made independently irrespective of the negotiations since the situation calls for them.

Delegation Submits Draft Agreement Following Talks

TA2503121694 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1100 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Text] The Israeli negotiating team returning from Cairo has reported to Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin on its tentative agreement with the PLO on security arrangements for Hebron. Also taking part in the meeting at the Prime Minister's Office were Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres and Environment Minister Yosi Sarid. Steve Linde has the details.

The Israeli delegation returned home this morning carrying a draft agreement on security arrangements in Hebron which they presented to the prime minister. Chief Palestinian negotiator Nabil Sha'th said the proposal worked out in a 14-hour negotiating session in Cairo needed the approval of the PLO and Israeli leaderships. The details have not been disclosed but the security package apparently includes plans for lightly armed foreign observers, probably from Norway, and Palestinian police in Hebron. Both Israeli and Palestinian negotiators said significant progress was made in Cairo but several issues remain to be settled. The head of the Israeli team, Major General Amnon Shahaq, said the negotiations would resume in Cairo on Tuesday. Shahaq and Sha'th would not elaborate but reporters in Cairo said they were both upbeat, laughing and joking before the Israeli team headed home for the Passover holiday.

An Israeli source said the differences between the two sides were mainly on numbers, of both foreign observers and Palestinian police. The source said Israel would agree to several dozen Palestinian police employed by the Hebron municipality and connected to the police force in Gaza and Jericho; but, the Israeli Army would have ultimate responsibility for security.

Terry Larsen, the Norwegian envoy, confirmed that the stationing of observers from his country was being negotiated. When asked about early reports of a 1,000 observers, he said: take away one zero, presumably meaning 100.

Israeli sources say both the Norwegians and the Palestinian police would be armed with pistols for self-defense. Sources in Jerusalem say once the final details for security in Hebron are agreed, Israel and the PLO will announce the resumption of talks on the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho.

Palestinian Police To Deploy in Gaza, Jericho

TA2503152394 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Text] Several dozen Palestinian policemen will begin to deploy in Gaza and Jericho in 10 days. This comes about in the wake of the Cairo talks and the deliberations which took place at the prime minister's bureau today. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that the first stage reference is to policemen who will have no enforcement powers, but will come to study the area. According to the agreement that is being consolidated, the Palestinian policemen in Hebron will supervise facilities, including the town hall and the university. Israeli forces and the Palestinian police will also conduct joint patrols, under Israeli command.

As for the Norwegian observers, it has been reported that Israel demands that they number between 50 and 60, while the Palestinians want to have about 150. Our correspondent adds that the negotiations which will resume in Cairo on Tuesday are slated to end by 12 April.

According to plans, the agreement will be signed by Prime Minister Rabin and PLO leader 'Arafat. Further meetings between 'Arafat and Foreign Minister Peres may take place before the signing.

The prime minister will hold another discussion early next week, prior to the resumption of the Cairo talks on Tuesday.

Netanyahu Terms Hebron 'Heart of Eretz Yisra'el'

TA2803114794 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 28 Mar 94

[Text] Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu says he has been informed that the government intends to exploit the massacre in Hebron to uproot the Hebron Jewish settlement. Speaking to our correspondent this morning, Netanyahu warned that such an act would cause a terrible rift. He reiterated his call on the prime minister to consult with leaders of the opposition and with the Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza settlement leaders on ways to safeguard the security of Hebron settlers. Uprooting is not the answer to the problem of their security, Netanyahu said.

He further stated that Hebron is the heart of Eretz Yisra'el, and that we have never acknowledged its being an occupied territory. He said he is against the uprooting of Jews from anywhere, including Hebron.

Commander Makes Decision To Lift Hebron Curfew

TA2503182894 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1800 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Text] The curfew on Hebron has been lifted. According to a decision by Major General Dani Yatom, the commander of the Central Command, the curfew was lifted from the town early this evening, except for the area near Bet Hadassah and the Avraham Avinu courtyard. Only Arab residents who live in this area will be allowed to enter this area. The wholesale market near the Jewish settlement in Hebron will not reopen for the time being. Our correspondent Moti Amir reports that the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] reinforced its units in Hebron in order to maintain order and to increase the sense of security for the town's residents.

Army Disperses Dozens of Settlers in Hebron

TA2703201694 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Excerpts] In Hebron, the Army dispersed dozens of settlers who wanted to protest the detention of their friends yesterday. No force was used. Hundreds of Qiryat Arba' residents yesterday tried to reach the Cave of the Patriarchs to hold the Passover seder there. The Army prevented their exit from Qiryat Arba'. There were clashes between the soldiers and the settlers, and nine of them were transferred to the Hebron police. Later in the evening it was decided to detain five of them, and they were transferred to a Jerusalem detention center. They were dispossessed of their arms.

Moledet Knesset Member Ba-Gad told our correspondent that the number of detainees is 15. According to Ba-Gad, Rabbi Waldman held the seder on the road since he was not allowed access to the Cave of the Patriarchs. The residents of Bet Hadassah in Hebron told Rabbi Ba-Gad that they are not allowed to leave their place of residence. The settlers in Hebron are afraid to leave the town lest they will be forbidden to return and thus the number of settlers in Hebron will decline. Rabbi Hayim Druckman, one of the National Religious Party leaders, told our correspondent Mikha'el Tuchfeld that the security forces desecrated the holiday by erecting barbed-wire fences at the exit from Qiryat Arba', by bringing in hundreds of male and female soldiers by bus, and by carrying out other work in the area. [passage omitted]

Two border policemen and three Israeli civilians were slightly injured by stones during incidents in the territories today. They were treated and released to their homes. Twenty six Arab residents were wounded by soldiers' fire in Tulkarm, Ramallah, Hebron, and Gaza.

IDF Preparations for Gaza Evacuation Completed

TA2503192994 Jerusalem New Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Video report by correspondent Roni Daniyel]

[Text] Over the past few days the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] in Gaza has completed all preparations for the evacuation of bases from the Gaza Strip. The Southern Command can evacuate the region in less than a week from the moment the agreement with the PLO is signed. Our military correspondent Roni Daniyel has the details:

Everything which is not vital has already been removed from the Gaza Strip, and the Southern Command can carry out the task of evacuation, if and when the agreements are signed, by the middle of April. We are not fully packed, it was stated in the Southern Command, but what is left can be evacuated in only a few days. There are detailed plans for overlapping with the Palestinian security forces, including a joint command for the days of the evacuation which will begin in Rafah and end in Gaza.

The security system which will be in effect after the evacuation is also already in operation in the Qatif Bloc. The usual security activity, including the chasing of armed wanted people, continues, but the IDF is surely waiting for the signing of the agreement and the evacuation.

IDF Officers Blame SLA for Katyusha Attacks

TA2603083994 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Text] Senior officers in the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Northern Command have criticized the lack of professionalism shown by the SLA [South Lebanese Army] and the poor discipline in its ranks. The IDF officers said it was the irresponsibility and lack of discipline shown by the SLA officers who, on their own initiative, shelled al-Nabatiyah and the outskirts of Sidon, which led to the firing of Katyusha rockets at the Galilee this week. Four Lebanese citizens were killed and 30 were wounded in the shelling, most of them schoolchildren from al-Nabatiyah.

Our correspondent in the north Yo'av Aviv reports that last night, the terrorists sneaked out of the SLA outpost they had seized in the Jazzin enclave. The body of a missing SLA soldier was later found at the scene. South Lebanon was quiet last night.

IDF Officer Wounded in Terrorist Ambush

TA2703052194 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] In Gaza city yesterday, an IDF [Israel Defense Forces] officer sustained moderate to serious wounds when hit by terrorist gunfire. The terrorists fired shots from a passing car at an IDF patrol on al-Nasir street in the al-Shaykh Radwan neighborhood. The soldiers returned fire but the car managed to escape. The wounded officer was rushed by helicopter to Beersheba's Soraka Medical Center and operated upon.

Update on Clashes in Territories; 19 Arabs Hurt

TA2603175694 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1600 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] In Qalqilyah, a border policeman was slightly injured by a stone. In clashes with security forces in the territories, 19 residents were hurt: 10 in Nabulus, three in Hebron, two in Tulkarm, and four residents of the Jabalyah refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. In Gaza City, border policemen fired at a suspect car, wounding one of the passengers. A Carl Gustav was found in his possession. He was detained for questioning. The other passengers in the car fled on foot.

Two senior members of the Arab Liberation Front, a rejectionist organization, were captured in the Gaza Strip. The two wanted people, Khalid al-Afgani from the

al-Burayj refugee camp, and al-Nasir Abu-Madin from Gaza, were detained for interrogation. A gun was found in their possession.

In Salah-al-Din Street in East Jerusalem, several Arabs rioted and threw stones at an Israeli car. The driver escaped unharmed, but his car was set on fire and burned.

Further on Clashes in Territories

TA2603184894 Jerusalem New Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Excerpts] There were clashes between Arabs and IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers in the territories today. In Gaza, six residents were wounded by soldiers' fire, including an eight-year-old child who was wounded in the head and is being treated at al-Shifa' Hospital. [passage omitted]

Serious clashes took place in other parts of Hebron too. Ten residents were wounded by fire and blows during these clashes. Yoram Binur reports:

The incidents in Hebron today were particularly grave. Fatah's youths arrived at the central town square, erected roadblocks, and threw stones at the soldiers. Palestinian sources reported that 10 wounded people reached the town's hospitals. The debris of the Razzaq family's house in Hebron, where the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] wanted members were killed, became a site of pilgrimage today. The visitors were presented with the remnants of the missiles the Army fired at the building, as well as the live ammunition left there. In leaflets disseminated in Hebron today the Hamas takes pride in the fact that its members do not surrender.

In Nabulus, clashes between residents and the Army continued today too. Tension in the territories is mounting, and among other things, the IDF is again sealing off alleys and doorways which were opened as a goodwill gesture in the framework of the peace agreement.

Prime Minister on League Charter, Regional Issue

NC2603090694 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Telephone interview with Jordanian Prime Minister Dr. 'Abd-al-Salam al-Majali, in Amman, by Ramadan Husayn, in Cairo, date not given; from the "Dialogue from Afar" program—recorded]

[Text] [Husayn] Welcome in our program.

[Al-Majali] Thank you.

[Husayn] Prime Minister, His Majesty King Husayn has just ended a Gulf tour that took him to the Sultanate of Oman and Qatar. This tour coincided with important developments on the Arab scene. What was the outcome of that tour?

[Al-Majali] We are going through a delicate phase. His Majesty King Husayn always makes a point of exchanging views with his brothers the Arab leaders. His visits to Qatar and Oman were in this context. His Majesty is an advocate of Arab reconciliation and coordination. He does not want a new order to emerge in the region without all the Arab brothers being actively involved in shaping it.

[Husayn] Dr. al-Majali, Jordan and Egypt held intensive consultations with the sides of the Yemeni crisis. The Yemenis then signed the Pledge and Accord Document in Amman. Soon afterward, disagreement surfaced again in Yemen. Is Jordan currently engaged in any mediation efforts to resolve the crisis in Yemen?

[Al-Majali] Since the onset of the Yemeni crisis, the Yemeni president and vice president have been in touch with His Majesty King Husayn, who they saw as able to settle the differences between them. With characteristic patriotism and pan-Arab enthusiasm, His Majesty worked closely with them until the pledge and accord document was signed in Amman. Differences then surfaced over the implementation of that document, but I think that consultations are continuing and we pray to God Almighty that the difficulties facing the implementation of that document will be surmounted. What matters is that they have succeeded in formulating a good document; and I think that everyone is committed to it. There are practical obstacles right now, but God willing, they will be overcome.

[Husayn] Mr. Prime Minister, the Arab League Council will hold its 101st session a few hours from now. Would you tell us about the Jordanian position on the issues on the agenda, particularly Arab national security matters and the amendment of the Arab League Charter?

[Al-Majali] Approximately half a century has passed since the Arab League Charter was written. The number of member states has increased and the international scene is no longer the same. Therefore, we believe that the charter should be revised. We also believe that there is a need to revise the UN Charter, not just the Arab League's. This charter [not further specified] should take into account the changed international scene, or risk being outdated. That is one thing.

Also, we believe that the Arab League should be a forum for discussing the new order in the Arab world. The Arab world should strive for more cohesion and solidarity so as to be able to avoid the type of disasters that have befallen it due to divisions in its ranks and a certain lack of communication.

[Husayn] Dr. al-Majali, will Jordan press for a change in the original text of the charter or does it support the view that a new addendum would suffice?

[Al-Majali] Actually, I think that the charter's original text should be amended. But if the Arab brothers agree on an addendum and if that addendum is as binding as the original charter, this would be a mere technicality. What matters is the spirit in which the charter's amendment is made or the addendum formulated.

[Husayn] Mr. Prime Minister, how do you see the situation now, following UN Security Council Resolution 904, which denounces the Hebron massacre, and in light of the current consultations concerning providing international protection to the Palestinians?

[Al-Majali] We hope that the spirit of this resolution will find practical expression. The Palestinians are in desperate need of protection, both during the negotiations and the transitional phase, the phase we hope will begin soon. We want this protection to be provided. Practical measures should be taken in this regard.

There must be a clear vision on the other [Israeli] side. The Israelis must abandon the fears they had in the past. The Hebron massacre proves the absurdity of talk about the settlements remaining where they are. These settlements are bad news for peace. The United States has expressed this view hundreds of times, as did the whole world. Therefore, there must be enough boldness to take the right step and remove these settlements, because they are quite a serious obstacle. I am aware that the two sides agreed that the settlements will be discussed in a later stage of the negotiations, but it is clear that the presence of settlements and the attacks by settlers are responsible for delaying the current negotiations.

[Husayn] That is right. What is happening on the Jordanian-Israeli track of the talks?

[Al-Majali] The situation is this: We believe in a just and comprehensive solution and want to see progress on all tracks. At the same time, we believe that every track has its particular nature and features. As we move along, we keep an eye on what is happening on the other tracks, because it is in the interest of all sides, including the Israelis, that a comprehensive solution emerge, rather than isolated agreements. Isolated agreements would only strengthen the hand of those who oppose peace and wish to wreck what we may achieve.

Therefore, I believe that we have to move forward. We hope that Israel is as serious as we are in this regard so that the peace process can advance on all tracks.

[Husayn] Thank you.

[Al-Majali] You are welcome.

Al-Majali Briefs Cabinet on Ross Visit

JN2603171794 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Text] The cabinet held a meeting today chaired by Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Salam al-Majali. The prime minister reviewed the results of the recent visit to Jordan by Dennis Ross, the U.S. Middle East peace coordinator.

Following the meeting, Jawad al-'Anani, minister of state for cabinet affairs and minister of information, told the Jordanian News Agency that the prime minister explained the most important points raised during his meeting with Mr. Dennis Ross. Ross expressed his optimism about the possibility of reaching an agreement between the Palestinian and Israeli sides on the issue of security arrangements in Hebron, in addition to immediate steps to take measures ensuring the implementation of the Gaza-Jericho First agreement. He pointed out that the Israeli side agreed to a Palestinian police force in Gaza, Jericho, and Hebron even before an agreement on the final arrangements has been reached.

The minister said the prime minister noted his meeting with Ross touched on the issue of the powers that will be transferred from the Israelis to the transitional Palestinian authority in various West Bank and Gaza Strip areas, with the exception of Jerusalem, the Israeli settlements, and Israeli military bases, as well as matters pertaining to expanding the scale of these powers.

Al-'Anani said the cabinet reviewed discussions with the U.S. side on bilateral relations, with a clear emphasis on the methods used to inspect ships in the Red Sea by warships stationed there, most of which are American. During his meeting with Ross, al-Majali noted that recently a noticeable increase has occurred in the number of ships turned back for unacceptable excuses. Jordan strongly protested this in view of its immense negative effects on the Jordanian economy. The number of ships inspected since 1991 has reached 1,700. The international inspecting forces have not been able to find a single violation. Therefore, Jordan rejects the continuation of this method and thinks the inspection should be transferred from the Red Sea to the Port of al-'Aqabah and that inpsections should be done by a neutral, nonmilitary side. Jordan proposed this just before his majesty's recent visit to the United States. It was discussed during his majesty's visit. The American side promised to look into this matter seriously at the time. A breakthrough is expected in this issue within a short time.

Al-'Anani added that the third point al-Majali put to the cabinet, and which was discussed during Mr. Ross's visit, is Jordan's emphasis on the need for practical progress in the peace process. The Israeli side has been sticking to its position, refusing to broach substantive issues, and has even resisted the implementation of agreements already reached. Without substantive progress in the near future, the peace process will be subject to great doubts.

Dr. al-'Anani explained that the fourth point discussed was the return to the bilateral negotiation rounds in Washington in April. The Jordanian side had announced that the agreement to return to negotiations should be an Arab decision, particularly by the cordon states. This issue may be discussed as part of the Arab foreign ministers meetings that began today.

Al-'Anani pointed to the possibility that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher may visit the region to discuss the return to the negotiation rounds in Washington and to agree on arrangements that would secure a positive development in the negotiations.

The information minister said Dr. al-Majali briefed the cabinet on the fact that Ross and his delegation said a tangible and clear breakthrough will be achieved on some negotiating tracks in 1994.

Dr. al-'Anani said the cabinet session touched on the campaigns external parties have begun to launch against Jordan. The cabinet quickly reviewed an Amnesty International statement that included praise of Jordan's important political developments and democratic march. This statement, however, criticized some formal restrictions mentioned in the new press and publications law and the execution of some civil criminals tried by civil Jordanian courts.

The cabinet listened to an explanation of this issue, presented by the information and interior ministers. The cabinet noted that Israeli media are launching campaigns that cast doubt on the Jordanian democratic march. It is clear that this campaign has certain objectives and is in harmony with current pressures on Jordan, in order to affect Jordan's political and negotiating position.

The prime minister said the constants of the Jordanian position are clear, that Jordan seeks a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace on all fronts, and that Jordan adheres to the joint agenda calling for discussion of all issues on the agenda, particularly occupied Jordanian territory, Jordan's water rights, and the refugees and displaced persons issue. The prime minister said unless satisfactory solutions to these points are reached, Jordan will not sign any peace agreement with Israel. Jordan has shown a real desire for peace since the Madrid negotiations began. Jordan's position has always supported real peace and the negotiations process. Therefore, the government rejects tendentious campaigns that cast doubt on Jordan's democracy and democratic institutions.

Minister Stresses Position on Jerusalem Issue

JN2603190694 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Text] Information Minister Dr. Jawad al-'Anani has asserted that the Jordanian position on Jerusalem is clear, frank, and unequivocal. In a statement to Jordan Television, Dr. al-'Anani said he agrees with the PLO on the need for coordination before and after any event or political development.

Dr. al-'Anani was commenting on a statement by the PLO office at the United Nations. The statement expressed astonishment at Jordan's position on inserting the Jerusalem issue in Security Council Resolution 904.

The information minister asserted that the Jerusalem issue was only mentioned in the resolution's preamble and not in the operative articles, which much weakens it. He said inserting the Jerusalem issue in this way in the resolution made it difficult to omit the word Jerusalem, and led to the U.S. abstention. It gave the United States a future pretext to abstain or even veto any resolutions on the basis that it has demonstrated its position in Resolution 904.

The minister said inserting the Jerusalem issue raised the voices of Israelis and the leaders of U.S. Jews, who say Jerusalem is Israel's unified capital. He stressed Jordan's consistent position on Jerusalem, namely, Jerusalem is an indivisible part of the occupied Arab territories, as stipulated in Resolution 242, which provides for regaining all occupied Arab territories in return for peace.

Paper Views Ship Inspection at al-'Aqabah

JN2703110094 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 27 Mar 94 pp 1, 5

[By JORDAN TIMES staff reporter by P.V. Vivekanand]

[Text] Amman—For the first time since the imposition of international sanctions against Iraq, a cargo ship carrying freight for Jordan coming through the Red Sea will be inspected on shore instead of high seas in what could turn out to be a precedent- setting event, informed sources said Saturday.

The sources said the Skyman, a 13,000-tonne German vessel carrying 3,000 tonnes of general cargo for Jordan, was expected to dock at al-'Aqabah on Monday and a "civilian officer" from the diplomatic mission of one of the members of the anti-Iraq coalition would inspect the cargo at the port.

The Skyman was prevented from proceeding towards al-'Aqabah on March 18 by the U.S.-led enforcers of the international sanctions against Iraq. After four inspections, the inspectors ruled on Wednesday that the ship could not be allowed to proceed to al-'Aqabah since they did not have "accessibility" to inspect some of the cargo.

The vessel proceeded to a Gulf port to unload cargo destined there before returning to the Red Sea for a new inspection with better cargo accessibility, the sources said.

"It was half way to a Gulf port from the Red Sea when an agreement was reached after Jordanian Government intervention that the vessel could be inspected at al-'Aqabah port rather than the Tiran Straits," where the inspections usually take place, said one source. "Subsequently, it was recalled to al-'Aqabah. The vessel is expected at al-'Aqabah on Monday."

The Skyman is carrying general cargo, including steel rods and animal feed, for the Jordanian market, according to the ship's agents.

The inspection of the Skyman will be the first on-land inspection of cargo coming through al-'Aqabah after the imposition of the sanctions against Iraq in August 1990.

It was not immediately clear whether the agreement for land-based inspection of the Skyman was a one-time procedure or the forerunner of a mechansim proposed by Jordan.

Jordan, whose maritime operations are severely hampered as a result of what many officials here describe as over-zealous enforcement of the sanctions, proposed early this year that the inspections be carried out at al-'Aqabah port by an international agency. The proposal was viewed positively by American administration officials, according to sources.

However, follow-up action on the proposal was at snail's pace, and Jordan was enraged by what appeared to be an escalation of the inspections and tightened guidelines imposed by the American-led warships patrolling the Red Sea.

At least seven al-'Aqabah-bound vessels, including the Skyman, were denied permission to enter the Gulf of Aqaba by the enforcers of the sanctions since January this year compared to 20 during the whole 1993.

The Jordanian Government repeatedly protested to the U.S. as well as the U.N. sanctions Committee against the "siege of Aqaba." (see separate story) The Lower House of Parliament urged the government last week to refuse to return to the U.S.-sponsored peace talks with Israel before the blockade of Aqaba is lifted and the lifting is formally announced at the U.N. Security Council.

Diplomatic sources said the inspection of the Skyman could be a "dress rehearsal" for setting up a firm mechanism for land-based inspection at al-'Aqabah as proposed by Jordan.

Lloyds Register of London, an independent international agency which has extensive experience in cargo inspections all over the world, is tipped to be the body which would take over the inspection at al-'Aqabah as and when the mechanism is in place.

Lloyds officials have visited al-'Aqabah several times in the past three months to evaluate the facilities available for inspections and for talks with Jordanian shipping officials.

Iraqi Assembly Speaker Arrives en Route to Baghdad

JN2803091294 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 28 Mar 94 p 1

[Text] Amman, PETRA—Iraqi National Assembly Speaker Sa'di Mahdi Salih and his delegation arrived in Amman last night on their way to Baghdad after participating in the 91st conference of the Interparliamentary Union held in the French capital, Paris.

Salih was received at the airport by Dr. 'Abd-al-Razzaq Tubayshat, first deputy speaker of the House of Representatives, and 'Abd Musa al-Nahar, second deputy speaker of the House of Representatives.

IAF Deputy Says Current Democracy 'Superficial'

JN2803105694 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 28 Mar 94 p 3

[Text] Amman—A prominent Islamic Action Front (IAF) deputy has described democracy in Jordan as "superficial" and charged speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Tahir al-Masri with collaborating with the government in preventing deputies from raising issues that the government did not want addressed.

"Democracy is only applied when it is convenient to serving certain parties' interests, said Deputy 'Abd-al-'Aziz Jabr (Amman First district), who charged that some of the issues raised by lawmakers in the form of questions to the government were disregarded during the House's first ordinary session which ended last week.

The IAF deputy told the JORDAN TIMES that some of the "sensitive issues" addressed by deputies were deliberately ignored by Mr. al-Masri who, he said, has failed to present them to the government.

Mr. Jabr said he had questioned the government on why it had allowed 30 Jews into Jordan, but denied entry to two prominent Egyptian Islamists. He said Mr. al-Masri did not pass his question on to the government.

The deputy also accused Mr. al-Masri of "overlooking" an IAF legislators' bid to introduce a law banning the consumption of alcohol in the country. A draft law on alcohol consumption has been presented by the government to the House, which referred it to its Parliamentary Committee.

Parliamentary sources told the JORDAN TIMES the House has decided to "sit on the legislation" to avoid the controversy the draft legislation is expected to raise.

The draft law puts some restrictions on the sale of alcohol, but does not ban its consumption in the Kingdom.

The IAF wants alcohol prohibited in accordance with Islamic Sharia and is expected to use religious clauses clearly forbidding the use of alcohol by Muslims to embarrass deputies who would not support its bid.

Other members of the House shared Mr. Jabr's discontent with Mr. al-Masri's "casual brushing" off of their questions and had demanded that all their queries be answered by the government in the House's last meeting on March 22.

But that could not be done and many questions went unanswered by the government, Mr. Jabr said.

During one of the last sessions of the House, several IAF deputies told Mr. al-Masri that he had nothing to "fear" in presenting deputies' inquiries to the government as it would be "pleased" to respond to all inquiries, some of which may be "too important" to leave unanswered.

Mr. al-Masri, however, dismissed the deputies' accusations, saying that these measures had to be taken because of the "lack of time," and that new arrangements would be made to accommodate deputies' requirements.

The disregard for democracy began long before this House convened in November last year, Mr. Jabr charged. He said it began when the government unilaterally introduced the one-person one-vote formula into the Election Law, which the Islamists and many other parties opposed.

Mr. Jabr added that deputies have demanded to be presented with a new draft election law of what he termed was of a more democratic nature, to be discussed in their extraordinary session which, parliamentary sources said, is expected to convene next month.

President, U.S. Envoy Meet; Minister Comments

NC2503150894 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Excerpts] President Ilyas al-Hirawi received Robert Pelletreau, assistant U.S. secretary of state for Middle East affairs, at the Presidential Palace this morning. The following is a dispatch from our correspondent at the Presidential Palace:

Mr. Pelletreau expected Arab-Israeli negotiations to resume toward the end of April. After meeting the president he stressed that American support for the Lebanese Government as it moves to bolster Lebanese national unity will continue. [passage omitted]

Earlier, Pelletreau visited Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz. [passage omitted] At the end of the meeting, Minister Buwayz made the following statement:

[Begin recording] [Unidentified correspondent] Has Mr. Pelletreau brought any new positions on the bilateral peace negotiations [words indistinct]?

[Buwayz] Mr. Pelletreau's visit is part of new American efforts to get the peace process moving. It follows various consultations with the parties involved in the negotiations. The United States is willing to give a new impetus to this process. Perhaps this needs additional intensive consultations at the level of the U.S. secretary of state.

[Correspondent] Have the discussions dealt with the explosive situation in the south?

[Buwayz] Yes. The talks touched on this situation and on repeated Israeli aggression, through which, we believe, Israel is (?harming) the peace process at the same time it is engaged in negotiations. There are also suspicions about internal interferences in this regard.

[Correspondent] [question indistinct]

[Buwayz] There is a climate that effectively means holding contacts [words indistinct] officials. I do not think that this round has been decided yet.

[Correspondent] Mr. Minister, did you discuss the continued U.S. ban on travel to Lebanon?

[Buwayz] I believe that the latest American decision includes some signs that the American position is changing. These include the period [word indistinct] the decision, which is shorter than that of earlier decisions, and certain phrases that suggest that this period will be used to reconsider the ban.

[Correspondent] Mr. Minister, it is known that you are leaving for Cairo today to attend the Arab League Council meeting. The Arab boycott against Israel is on the agenda. What do you expect from this?

[Buwayz] We believe the boycott was a result of a state of war. Lifting it should be a result of a state of peace. Making progress at the negotiations and reaching a declaration of principles that makes us believe that peace is becoming final and real will effectively and legally end the boycott. But abolishing the boycott theoretically while the state of war in the Middle East continues, I believe, will be only a (?theoretical) decision. At any rate, we believe that the boycott is a feature of the Arab-Israeli conflict and must be discussed within a comprehensive framework for peace.

[Correspondent] [words indistinct] the foreign ministers of the Arab cordon states in Cairo?

[Buwayz] It is customary for the meetings of the cordon states to be held independently from other regional or international meetings. This, however, does not mean that consultations or preparatory meetings in Cairo are not possible. But I think that any such meetings will only be in preparation for a coordination meeting, which may be held either in Cairo or in [words indistinct] independent from the Arab League meeting.

[Correspondent] Mr. Minister, is it true that Washington asked Lebanon to calm the [word indistinct] situation through negotiations?

[Buwayz] The U.S. policy toward this subject is steady; [?it always asks] the Lebanese Government to calm the situation and control things in the south. This is nothing new, but there is no exceptional interference in [words indistinct]

[Correspondent] Do you think the internal security situation will affect the negotiating delegation or the Lebanese-Israeli negotiations?

[Buwayz] Since the beginning of the negotiations, we have been eager to secure for the negotiating delegation a sort of immunity against all internal changes. I believe this climate is necessary for the delegation to continue the negotiations in the best way. Anyway, I believe [words indistinct] or negatively affect the performance.

[Correspondent] Mr. Minister, do you share the view that the private radio and television newscasts threatened state security?

[Buwayz] I believe a country like Lebanon, which is living in the middle of a volcano in this region, cannot continue to have a disorganized security, media, and democracy. From this perspective, I think that we cannot live in a more easygoing and freer atmosphere than in Switzerland, France, or Britain. We live in a very turbulent area. Therefore, I believe that organizing the media through a clear and frank law will return matters to normal and to an acceptable level of freedom and democracy commensurate with the internal situation and the homeland's security. In any case, I believe this principle is not new or exclusive to Lebanon. Freedom, if it is abused, hurts others. There is an acceptable level of freedom that guarantees the freedom of others, their rights, and the rights of the homeland. Therefore, a well-studied law that is based on the principle of freedom and democracy—which are basic in Lebanon and are the

pillars of this homeland—and that will place controls and checks to ensure that this freedom will not become an attack on the homeland will resolve this situation. [end recording]

Prime Minister, U.S. Official Meet in Paris

NC2603173094 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Text] In his home in Paris, Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri today met with Robert Pelletreau, U.S. assistant secretary of state for Middle East affairs. During the one-hour meeting, the two officials discussed the situation in the region and the Arab-Israeli talks, which will resume at the end of April.

Buwayz Blames Israel for Lack of Progress in Talks

NC2703172894 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1530 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz holds Israel responsible for the lack of progress in the peace process. He noted that the foreign ministers of Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan, who are now present in Cairo, may hold consultations to set an initial date for a meeting among themselves to coordinate their countries' policies on the peace talks.

Buwayz noted that U.S. envoy Robert Pelletreau, who visited Beirut recently, told him that Israel and the PLO may sign an agreement for limited self-rule in Gaza and Jericho in April. Buwayz called on Israel to announce its commitment to withdraw from the occupied part of southern Lebanon.

Information Minister Comments on Various Issues

JN2503163194 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1200 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Telephone interview with Information Minister Michel Samahah in Beirut by unidentified Radio Monte Carlo reporters in the studio—live]

[Text] [Reporter] Mr. Michel Samahah, it is feared that free expression in Lebanon might be curbed. What can you say in this regard to dispel these fears?

[Samahah] Nothing in the decision made necessitates fear for the media and freedom of expression in Lebanon. Lebanon has its own traditions as embodied in its people, heritage, and system. Lebanon is a parliamentary democracy. The measure taken is temporary and extraordinary. It is dictated by the current extraordinary circumstances of our country. This is evident in the plotting against the unity of Lebanese territory, the unity of the Lebanese people, and the unity of Lebanese institutions. Within the framework of the measures taken by the Council of Ministers, a media measure was taken regarding only the illegal and unlicensed audio and visual sector, pending the issuance of the audio and visual media law. The written means of expression, i.e., the Lebanese press—dailies, weeklies, monthlies, and periodicals—continue to exist. They are safeguarded by the Lebanese press law. The newspapers are issued daily, as normal. All opinions expressing the political and trade unionist reality of Lebanese society are being published.

As for the audio and visual media, the Council of Ministers will study and endorse the draft law in its extraordinary session on Tuesday [29 March] and then refer it to the Chamber of Deputies. I would like to stress here that when the Chamber of Deputies receives the government opinion as expressed in its draft law, it will make the decision. It will be free to study this law, ratify it as it is, or amend it in a manner that expresses the opinion of the Lebanese. The people's opinion is expressed through the Chamber of Deputies within the framework of the democratic parliamentary system.

[Reporter] May I say that the al-Hariri government decision was not taken to gag mouths or silence every opposition voice, and consequently leave the media arena only for the official voice?

[Samahah] Absolutely, absolutely. Opposition voices do exist. They have the opportunity to express themselves on Lebanese television, on official Lebanese radio, and in the national news agency, starting last night, after the closure of all—sorry, not closure, but suspension of—the transmission of news over radios sand televisions.

[Reporter] Mr. Minister, have private audio and visual media abided by the ban, especially the dissolved Lebanese Forces [LF] news media?

[Samahah] All Lebanese audio and visual news media operating on Lebanese territory have fully abided by the government decision since midnight on 23 March 1994. I had a series of meetings with officials in charge of these outlets, the latest of which ended two hours ago. We are working together in full harmony in order to implement this temporary arrangement, pending the ratification of the law regulating audio and visual media.

[Reporter] Can you say when the new law regulating private media will be issued?

[Samahah] I cannot anticipate the time the Chamber of Deputies will take to study and ratify the law. However, I will work from my position so the period will be the shortest possible.

[Reporter] I would like to refer to the government decision to dissolve the LF. Some say it was an attempt by the government to liquidate this party. LF Commander Samir Ja'ja' said yesterday that three of the suspects accused of the church explosion, who belong to the party, have been residing abroad for a long time. How were arrest warrants issued against them? Can you explain this point?

[Samahah] I would like to clarify two points. There is no retaliation between the government and the LF. The

security and political facts gathered on the general situation and the LF activities dictated that the Lebanese Government make a decision, upon the recommendation of the interior minister. As for the judicial aspect, arrest warrants were issued by the examining magistrate in this regard. No one can wade into the details of this subject before the end of the investigation. We should all respect the disengagement of powers between the executive and judicial estates. According to Lebanese laws and all international investigation laws, it is the examining magistrate who, based on available facts and figures, forms a judicial conviction, issues arrest warrants, and interrogates suspects upon their apprehension, in a legal manner and in the presence of a defense lawyer. The examining magistrate will then issue an indictment prior to trial. We expect this indictment to be issued once the investigation is over. The trial will be held publicly in the presence of the defense counsel.

[Reporter] Do you think the Government of Lebanon's adoption of these political, security, and media decisions came at the right time, in light of local and regional circumstances?

[Samahah] I think it was the right time, otherwise, the Lebanese Government would not have made these decisions at this time. Consequently, I think if we had not taken, or if we had delayed taking, these measures, we would have regretted it and our citizens would have accused us of delinquency.

[Reporter] In the government statement two days ago, you explicitly accused Israel of being behind the explosions in Lebanon. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin yesterday spoke about the resumption of negotiations between the Arabs and Israel at the end of next month. Will these accusations have any reflections on the negotiations between Israel and Lebanon?

[Samahah] The facts available to the Lebanese Government from the security angle, as well as political information and the proceedings of the negotiations, led us to directly accuse Israel. We are convinced of this accusation, based on the facts available to the Lebanese Government. As for negotiations, since the first day of negotiations in Madrid we have been sitting and talking to an enemy. We did so in solidarity with the Arab brothers. Together, we went to the negotiations, proceeding from the principles of Madrid conference. We all seek a just and comprehensive peace. Consequently, we will not be affected by the ongoing aggression on Lebanon—land and people—in the south through occupation, shelling, and the coercion of our people in the occupied Lebanese strip in southern Lebanon and the western al-Biqa'. We will not be affected by Israeli moves inside. This means we will continue our march toward peace, proceeding from the principles I have mentioned, at the negotiating table. Once the judicial investigation is over and real incriminations based on facts are made of Israeli involvement in explosions in Lebanon and [plotting] against the unity of Lebanon, the unity of authority in Lebanon, and the unity of people in Lebanon, the Lebanese Government, as its statement said, will take a position that will demand that the international community and the cosponsors of the conference deter Israel and prevent it from continuing all these aggressions, whether in occupied south Lebanon and the attacks on unoccupied southern Lebanon, or in the explosions and criminal hands that plant bombs in places of worship, as happened in the case of the Sayyidat al-Najat Church in Zuq [Mikha'il] and the fasting worshipers in it.

[Reporter] Your Excellency Lebanese Information Minister Michel Samahah, thank you for this direct telephone interview from Beirut. Is there anything else you would like to add at the end of this interview?

[Samahah] I would like to thank Radio Monte Carlo and appeal to all friends of Lebanon and all those who care for Lebanon's unity, its independence, sovereignty, and independent decision to help Lebanon eliminate the Israeli occupation and its repercussions for Lebanon's unity and the unity of the government in Lebanon. Thank you.

[Reporter] Thank you.

Holds News Conference 25 Mar

NC2503200594 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1707 GMT 25 Mar 94

[News conference by Information Minister Michel Samahah with unidentified correspondents in Beirut on 25 March—recorded]

[Text] [Samahah] Before anything else, I wish to welcome you all. At the beginning of this news conference, before we delve into details and issues, I would like to ask you to demonstrate your full professionalism at every stage we are going through in this country. That is, you need to always report the situation or the news item in full. Lebanese and Arab brothers in Lebanon who report on Lebanon, as well as the foreign correspondents who are here to report on developments, we beg of you to take into consideration the fact that this is a homeland whose people have suffered a great deal. It deserves your full professionalism on the one hand, and your help in reporting and commenting on events here on the other hand. You should do this to fortify its unity and help it emerge from the remnants of past events so that no foreign scheme to return it to its previous condition can slip into the country.

After that introduction to my meeting with you, I thank you for your work and all you are doing. Specifically, I address your professional duties in this homeland under these circumstances. To start off with—I would prefer to dedicate more time to questions and answers—but I would like to say that the circumstances Lebanon is experiencing and the repercussions of all events in the region, in particular the negotiations, have caused us to experience security events and actions during the recent stages that prompted the cabinet two days ago to take the

measures that it took. These are extraordinary measures because the situation in Lebanon at this stage is extraordinary and sensitive.

We are not claiming that the situation is dangerous. No. But so that the situation does not reach the danger point one day, we need to handle extraordinary situations with extraordinary measures that bolster the unity of the homeland—land, people, and institutions—and fortify the Lebanese national decision internally and in the negotiations taking place in Washington within the framework of the peace talks which started in Madrid.

I would now like to allow an opportunity for questions and answers.

[Correspondent] From what I hear you say, I infer that the decision to prevent the private media from broadcasting newscasts and political programs was demanded by negotiations [as heard], in an indirect manner, that is, and that the suspension will be for a long time. What can you say about that?

[Samahah] This inference is wrong and out of place. To be precise, the measure is exceptional and temporary. The Council of Ministers linked it to the audiovisual media law, which the cabinet will conclude on Tuesday. It will be available to the Chamber of Deputies as of Wednesday. It is absolutely not connected to negotiations or to what goes on during them. It is linked to security and the psychological experience the country has undergone. The decision does not condemn audiovisual media in Lebanon. This decision is not a condemnation; it prepares for the restoration of normalcy in the general atmosphere in the country at the sensitive stage we are going through. The future of these mass media, their circulation of news and their very existence, will depend on the new law. That is why we ordered the suspension of newscasts and did not close private radio and television stations, out of a desire to respect the Constitution, the nature of our people, and our system's observation of freedoms. The legalization of audiovisual mass media will be achieved through the new law.

As explained in the recent cabinet statement, all that is happening in Lebanon today—starting with the negative security incidents caused primarily by the heated situation in the south as a result of the Israeli occupation of our land and our people's resistance of this occupation and also by the assault against Lebanon's geographic, human, and personal identity as represented by the Sayyidat al-Najat explosion—is linked to our conflict with Israel in its various aspects and the ongoing negotiations with Israel. There is evidence in this connection. If anyone thinks that negotiations with Israel will dictate to us any position on suspending freedoms and preventing our people from expressing their views on this issue, this is out of the question completely. All freedoms, particularly in this field, are protected, not only by government decision or action, but by the actual practice of the Chamber of Deputies and daily practice. We exempted written media—newspapers and magazines—which are subject to the publication law. No measure, directive, or guidance has been issued to these media.

[Correspondent] Your Excellency, the Lebanese Government has adopted measures against the media.

[Samahah] Not all the media. No measures were adopted against the media. An information measure was adopted which fully respects and appreciates the role of the private media. Our objective behind this measure is to ensure a stronger commitment by everyone to the law and to the ongoing efforts to boost the national decision and services.

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct].

[Samahah] I want to speak clearly. Over the past four months, many things have happened in Lebanon. These include rumors and minor bombings of some holy places and certain educational centers and schools. They also include attacks on religious sites in several areas and attacks on the cemeteries of various sects. Furthermore, leaflets were distributed during the night inciting religious sedition, particularly during the holiday periods [words indistinct] spiritual families in Lebanon. Then came the bombing of the church in Zuq Mikha'il. This was followed by rumors. However, the source and motives of the rumors were known. [words indistinct].

What the security services and judicial authority have done is quite important to our homeland. It is an extraordinary measure. The information that was made available when the Council of Ministers adopted its decision demonstrated to us that Lebanon's unity, the Lebanese legitimate institutions, the unity of the Lebanese, and coexistence in Lebanon were the targets.

This is an extraordinary matter as far as we are concerned. What we experienced of events in the sixties, seventies, eighties, and early nineties made the government, as a result of the facts and information available to it, adopt extraordinary measures and stands that it announced after the recent session of the Council of Ministers.

This, therefore, is not a state of emergency; had it been so, we would have simply announced it. This is an extraordinary case that could be handled only by the extraordinary decisions and measures that the government took to stabilize the situation, to bolster the decision, and to protect Lebanon's most important foundations: the unity of the land, the institutions, and the citizens. The measures were also meant to remove the specter of the dark years that our citizens have experienced, remove it from their (?daily) life and their aspirations for a better future.

[Correspondent] [words indistinct]

[Samahah] I am not concerned [words indistinct] from all private audio, visual, and even printed media. There is no discrimination before the law [words indistinct]. All are equal before the law. When officials apply this to themselves, they become equal to nonofficials and to

those who are outside the decision centers in the government; both refrain from expressing their opinions in their media. This is a national measure taken in the context of national decisions at the level of the homeland. There was a need to ease the situation, remove the tension, and entrench stability. The decision was not meant to condemn the media or to evaluate them. Along with the other decisions, it was made out of concern for the citizens' psychological stability and national immunity. And because this is an extraordinary situation and the ban is an extraordinary, temporary move, the decision was basically related to the application of the Lebanese law, through the law on audio and visual media, to the existing media, which will continue to exist. This is not a restriction on freedoms, about which we are much concerned; this is an extraordinary case to bolster all elements of the homeland at a stage in which a new kind of confrontation is imposed on us by the Israeli enemy.

Regarding the first question—the deployment of the Lebanese Army in Saydun—I cannot say anything because nothing has yet been said officially concerning the dead men. If they belonged to the Lebanese Army, then the Army Command will make an announcement, and if not, [words indistinct] if the resistance carried out an operation against elements collaborating with Israel inside our occupied territory and the operation succeeded.

Regarding the second question, any media establishment on Lebanese territory that does not conform to the cabinet's decision to stop newscasts and direct or indirect political programs will be considered to have violated this decision. If that is the case, the necessary measures will be taken against it. There can be no vacillation or hesitation in this regard. The cabinet's decisions were made to be implemented and there can be no bargaining in this respect.

There is a special situation in southern Lebanon where the citizens are influenced by the media services in the occupied Lebanese territory. These citizens are the target of psychological warfare waged by the radio of the collaborators with Israel [Kafr Killa Voice of the South] and by Israel's radio. We are currently studying how to confront this situation through Lebanon's state radio and television. The state radio reaches several areas and state television covers most parts of the south. In the next 24 hours we will boost transmission to that area. All this is within the framework of implementing the cabinet's decision. No one [word indistinct] in Lebanon has violated this decision.

[Correspondent] First, do you believe gallows will be set up in Beirut [words indistinct]? Second, do you believe the investigation [words indistinct]?

[Samahah] There is no person in Lebanon, be he Lebanese or non-Lebanese, who does not come under the jurisdiction of Lebanese law. The Lebanese law is above everyone, regardless of his capacity, responsibility, and position. The death sentence is the jurisdiction of the Lebanese judiciary. The government cannot anticipate the verdicts of the specialized courts on who will be sentenced to death or what the sentences will be. The Lebanese Government can affirm and I can affirm on behalf of the president that if the courts issue death sentences, these sentences will be carried out where the crimes took place. If the law or the investigation involves big and small fish, there are no small and big fish; there are citizens or residents on Lebanese territory. If they are convicted, accused, or arrest warrants are issued against them, the law will be applied and they will be brought to investigation. They will be equally treated and their full rights will be safeguarded, such as having a defense attorney present during the interrogation and to defend them in public trials that are held in accordance with the procedures for Lebanese trials.

[Correspondent] Could we go back to [words indistinct]?

[Samahah] What is the question?

[Correspondent] The question is will the fate of [words indistinct]?

[Samahah] [Words indistinct].

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct]?

[Samahah] I will start by answering the latter part, because the answer to the latter part makes answering the second and first parts of the questions easier. All the circumstances that have been created in the past in Christian society, or in the Christian street as you called it, took various forms to pave the way for what was supposed to take place in the Christian street as a result of the death of over 100 people in the Phalangist Party headquarters explosion and over 100 people in the Zuq Mikha'il Church bomb.

We heard some voices programmed to make statements at the same time as the explosion, on the night it happened and the days following it, targeting the unity of Lebanon by calling for self-security and federalism. Thus, whoever wanted to frustrate the Christian street was planting the seeds through which he could reap Lebanon's fragmentation. He was building on the frustration and absence of relations with the authorities, the regime, and the legitimate institutions that unite the homeland. Through this gap, he would then demand international protection, to go along with talk we have recently heard about requests for international protection, as an after-effect of the massacre at the al-Ibrahimi Mosque or the international protection that has been demanded for Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Lebanon is a different case altogether. Lebanon is not territory occupied by another power as is the case in the occupied Arab territories in Palestine which makes the Palestinians demand international protection. The same case as the Palestinian one also applies to the struggle in Bosnia-Herzegovina, for one party in the struggle to demand international protection from an oppressor

party. Lebanon is united in its territory and people; there is coexistence among the spiritual families. Lebanon is also united in its institutions and authorities. Therefore, the objective of all attempts that started a long time ago to plant frustration in the minds of some people in the Christian street was to move from this condition to another condition which would be the result of programmed explosions. Reactions to these programmed explosions were also programmed to demand the fragmentation of the country.

Consequently, one cannot be frustrated if one believes in the ideals of the spiritual families, believes in the homeland, has a democratic political pattern in the political work inside the country, and believes in his land. This frustration represents an evil desire that seeks to dismember the homeland. What is required is that we pass these tests. Thank God, our people and their leaders have shown cohesion in confronting the aftermath of the church bombing and the Phalangist Party headquarters bombing. We must rally more around the state's establishments, around the unity of the homeland, and around the citizens' unity.

I now come to the subject of freedoms, and consequently the subject of the television and radio media law. [words indistinct] It is natural that this law should take its course [words indistinct]. The cabinet has now received this law. At its last meeting, the cabinet adopted a decision to discuss this law definitively at an extraordinary meeting to be held especially for this purpose on Tuesday [29 March]. [words indistinct] The decision is that we should study and approve this law at a meeting on Tuesday even if the meeting is a long one. I hope that even if the meeting takes a long time we will be able to finalize it and refer it [to parliament] on Wednesday. I am confident that with the new willpower of the cabinet [words indistinct] the law will reach the phase of final study and final approval at the next meeting. [words indistinct]

[Correspondent] Mr. Minister, some newspaper reports claim that the United States [words indistinct] knew about the Council of Ministers' decision before they were issued [words indistinct]. Is this true?

[Samahah] This is certainly not true. The way I read this report in some newspapers, it was published as though it was a confirmed report. In order to make these decisions—and you can testify to what I am saying—the recent session of the Council of Ministers started at 1700 and ended at 2230 in the evening. In other words, these decisions were discussed at length and in depth. They were decided by the session. No one can have prior information before a session begins about decisions that are made during that session through a consensus of the Council of Ministers and that are formulated during the session. Anyone who suggests such an idea, is wrong. The Lebanese Government's decisions are made by the Lebanese Government itself during its meetings. The Government is not affected by any necessity to inform some other party before it makes these decisions [words indistinct]. No. Many of the decisions were proposed during the [Council of Ministers] session and their proposition, discussion, and approval were dictated by the facts that were available to the Council of Ministers during the session.

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct] Mr. Minister [words indistinct] an attempt to [words indistinct] change the Lebanese society, and [words indistinct]. Could one say that the measures taken by the Council of Ministers are an attempt to [word indistinct] the media [words indistinct]?

[Samahah] You are talking about the decisions dealing with the media?

[Correspondent] Yes, the media and [word indistinct] preparing Lebanese society [words indistinct]? Can you comment on the [word indistinct] negotiations?

[Samahah] The decisions that we have made are not linked in any way to the contents of the peace negotiations nor to any possible evaluations we might have about the results of these negotiations. The decisions we adopted were made as a result of the information available to us. They are an indivisible whole. The decisions we made concern the media, the political situation, security, and a host of issues on handling the extraordinary circumstances, situation, and reality the country is going through.

The temporary nature of the decision regarding the audio-visual media is linked to this reality and nothing else. It has no background in, or relationship to the results of the negotiations on the one hand, nor to the actual contents of the law on audio and visual media to be issued. Had we wanted to restrict freedoms, or had there been ulterior motives to restrict freedoms, the decision would have also included the print media and press. Our decision does not include these two areas, because they are covered by a separate law, which exists within its own framework. The Cabinet decision was made under extraordinary circumstances for specific purposes and for a limited period of time. I sincerely hope that it will not last too long.

The law includes the audio and visual media only, for the reasons I explained at the beginning of our meeting. There is nothing else behind these reasons and they are not linked to the negotiations or their results.

The country's security situation [words indistinct] negotiations. When Israel threatens at the negotiations to change the course of these negotiations by disrupting security, we should be wary in interpreting this threat and linking it with the security incident that targets political decision-making through [words indistinct].

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct] some [word indistinct] the dissolution of the Lebanese Forces Party [words indistinct]?

[Samahah] The decision to dissolve the Lebanese Forces Party at the Cabinet meeting upon the interior minister's proposal was not made merely for judicial considerations. The Cabinet does not (?depend) on the judicial authorities' investigation. The Cabinet had no knowledge of the investigation and it has no access to the investigation before a judge makes an indictment.

In its decision, the cabinet relied on security and political considerations and on a number of incidents and factors in the context of its eagerness to enhance the domestic situation.

On the other hand, we in the government are concerned with Dr. Samir Ja'ja's case as much as we are concerned about any Lebanese citizen. As for what Dr. Ja'ja' decides to do, he is free to do what he likes. Whether or not he is implicated—as your question might suggest—this has to be decided by the judiciary in light of the evidence they have and the conviction of the investigating judge, who alone has the right to act according to his convictions. We cannot predict or jump to conclusions on this issue.

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct]

[Samahah] According to the Cabinet's information, we do not believe that for four years Lebanon has witnessed such progress in consolidating stability and national unity and institutions as it has in the past three or four weeks. Besides, no conditions as serious and delicate as those which prevailed recently have ever existed in Lebanon before.

The Cabinet's recent assessment of the general course of domestic events required us to adopt this kind of important, bold, and extraordinary decisions to protect the unity of the land and the people and the country's security and stability, all of which was at stake.

Our aim was to dispel the fear that held the nation in thrall and that was blamed, we were told, on frustration. Bombs were planted, leaflets were distributed, places of worship were attacked, and rumors were spread, creating an extraordinary situation, one which the Cabinet was mindful of when it made its decisions at this specific point in time.

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct] the media that supports or opposes the Government?

[Samahah] Private media cannot be easily classified as progovernment or antigovernment. Those who support the Government and those who oppose it, as well as those who make up their minds as they go all work for various media organs. Means of expression are still available in Lebanon. We still have newspapers. The press is still free. We still have Lebanese Television, Radio Lebanon, and the NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY.

The private media, by their very nature, were not in the habit of printing all statements in full. Your objection, although valid, is not the only consideration that dictates everything that should be published. The official media do not carry the full statements of the information minister, just the highlights. The situation will be dealt with gradually. The official media will be as open to the Government as to the opposition. They will reflect the country's political life to the fullest extent.

The measure that has been taken is an extraordinary and temporary one, if I may repeat. We are not making excuses. This is an extraordinary situation and, whether you are Lebanese or foreign, you must be aware of that from the experience of the past few weeks, for you have been in close touch with events.

Extraordinary circumstances call for extraordinary measures. These measures will not last for long, because we want the situation to go back to normal.

[Correspondent] Mr. Minister, what is it that is frightening you about the radio and television stations? Is there something specific [preceding word in English] about what these radio and television stations did? You have 50, 60, or 100 radio and television stations [words indistinct]. What precisely frightened you?

[Samahah] In what you have watched and heard on those television and radio stations, were there not broadcasts that largely contributed to the spread of anxiety or sought to encourage resentment in the ranks of certain sects or groups, thus possibly serving the same aims as the recent bombings? I am not saying everyone did this; only some and perhaps only a few. After carefully observing these broadcasts, we judged that in addition to the positive and helpful atmosphere provided by some television and radio stations, some others created certain atmospheres that were amenable to Israeli-influenced plans. Were these stations doing this innocently or maliciously? In view of our exceptional circumstances, it was necessary for us to make not only this exceptional decision, but a large number of exceptional decisions. Furthermore, we made this decision because, for the first time ever, we had uncovered schemes to disrupt the country's security; we discovered their planners and those who carried out the schemes. We also came into possession of security information apart from the data that is purely judicial. We acted preemptively in order to protect our resolutions during these exceptional circumstances.

This will not last long. Soon these audiovisual media will be governed by law, as in other countries. I do not wish to draw a comparison between Lebanon, in its current circumstances, and those very few countries that have no new laws governing the media.

We must keep in mind that no one else has passed through 20 dark years as we did. No one else is going through a period of domestic recuperation while living in regional circumstances like ours and negotiating at the same time. We are not taking anyone to task, as I said at the beginning. I am saying exactly what I mean. I was careful in choosing my words when I discussed the subject. We are not taking anyone to task. The measure we implemented was precautionary, not disciplinary. We

are not trying to suppress these media. Had we wanted to do this, we would have closed them down. We simply adopted a protective measure, pending the issuance of the media law and the results of our ongoing communications with the people in charge of those media.

[Correspondent] What guarantee is there, Mr. Minister, that [words indistinct] the media law for a period [words indistinct]?

[Samahah] Thank you for that question. The guarantee is the Lebanese system. The nature of the Lebanese system and the existence of the democratic institutions in the Lebanese system, particularly the existence of the Chamber of Deputies, is our guarantee that no one will misuse his authority. I think that as a minister in the Government I know that the Government does not want and will not misuse its authority. If, God forbid, the authority has been misused, there is the Chamber of Deputies to monitor the misuse of authority.

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct] the issuance of the law by the Council of Ministers on Tuesday?

[Samahah] Yes. You arrived late. These questions were asked before your arrival.

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct] the decision to dissolve the Lebanese Forces was adopted after the judicial authorities' decision. The judicial authorities issued a tentative indictment [words indistinct] regarding a certain political party, but no measures were adopted against it. Why?

[Samahah] The tentative indictment was issued yesterday. A Council of Ministers meeting will be held on Tuesday. Wait for the Council of Ministers' decisions on Tuesday.

[Correspondent] In the wake of the Zuq Mikha'il explosion, [words indistinct] arrest warrants were issued [words indistinct] the Lebanese Forces. [Words indistinct] involved certain areas only?

[Samahah] They covered all areas, and successive ...

[Correspondent, interrupting] ...did not go beyond a specific area?

[Samahah] Measures are being adopted in all the Lebanese Army's deployment areas. Statements are being issued by the Lebanese Army regarding all the confiscations that are taking place. There is no discrimination. All Lebanese are equal under the law and according to security measures. There is no autonomous security in Lebanon.

[Correspondent] When will it take up its new (?positions)?

[Samahah] It will take its new positions in its present deployment areas, in the areas where it has the ability to do so, and in the areas where the Syrian Army, which complements the Lebanese security forces, is deployed. The same measures are being adopted in all Lebanese territory and covers all Lebanese citizens.

[Correspondent] Mr. Minister, my question is about the operations area of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon. [Words indistinct] the deployment of the Lebanese Army, will it leave the area or [words indistinct]?

[Samahah] This involves another very careful consideration related to the Israeli occupation and the confrontation with Israeli occupation.

[Correspondent] Mr. Minister, did the Council of Ministers consider [words indistinct]?

[Samahah] These measures have been adopted and will be implemented. The Lebanese authorities are working to maintain security according to Government policy. Thank you.

Denies Report on Media Ban

JN2703083394 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0500 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Dispatch by Antoine Kustantin from Beirut]

[Excerpts] [Passage omitted] This morning, through Radio Monte Carlo, Lebanese Information Minister Michel Samahah denied yesterday's AL-NAHAR report on the restrictions the minister has communicated to the owners of the media organs, including a ban on commenting on economic and sports news. Minister Samahah said:

[Begin recording] [Samahah] First of all, I would like to say that I do not like posturing. While the meeting with the officials in charge of media organs was under way, I had hoped that the source of this report would reveal its identity and say what it had to say at the meeting and not outside it. The meeting was held in a normal manner at the request of some representatives of media organs. The atmopshere was very calm, very responsible, and nothing of what one local paper has reported took place. The presence of his excellency the director of the Public Security Department was natural because in the Press and Publications Law, which is currently in force in Lebanon, the prerogatives of the Public Security Department concerning political censorship are very clear. I wanted his excellency the director general to attend this meeting with the media officials to prevent any future clamor on the contents of the cabinet's decision. The meeting was normal, and the media officials who attended showed a sense of responsibility. I thank them for their cooperation during and after the meeting.

[Kustantin] Your Excellency, it has been said that some questions were raised about broadcasting Friday sermons and Sunday sermons, and that some Friday sermons have disturbed you?

[Samahah] There was no anxiety. There was only complete understanding. The banning of broadcasting Friday sermons or those delivered during Sunday masses has

not been discussed at all. What is usually said in these sermons deals with religious topics and has nothing to do with politics. Therefore, there is absolutely no need for interpretation on this topic.

[Kustantin] Your Excellency, two points still need to be clarified. The first deals with one of the radio stations which you were reportedly asked to ban because it transmits from outside Lebanon. Is this true?

[Samahah] There is some ambiguity concerning a specific radio station which transmits from outside Lebanon, and has...

[Kustantin, interrupting] An intermediary office, station in Lebanon?

[Samahah] An intermediary station in Lebanon. This issue is being tackled, and I do not want to discuss it now. We want tc tackle all issues in a calm manner.

[Kustantin] Your Excellency, one last point. It has been mentioned that the owners of the media organs have asked you to submit a list of what is prohibited and what is allowed and you promised to present it at the next meeting, on Wednesday?

[Samahah] I reached an understanding with them. I do not believe that among us, we need to set lists and limits which can be harsh. We agreed on a group of things which have a direct bearing on the implementation of the cabinet's decision. They abide by this and implement them in a responsible manner. We agreed to hold periodic meetings to discuss in detail everything to do with the implementation of the decision and the law on visual and audio media.

[Kustantin] Your Excellency, thank you. [end recording]

Ross 'Guarantees' of Peace Progress Welcomed

PM2503151894 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 25 Mar 94 p 3

[Report by Ibrahim Humaydi: "Damascus Welcomes 'Guarantees' Offered by Ross of Progress in Peace Negotiations"]

[Excerpt] Damascus—Syria yesterday welcomed the guarantees of real progress this year which Dennis Ross, U.S. coordinator of the peace process, offered to Syrian officials. It also urged the U.S. Administration to change the Israeli position in the peace negotiations. Syrian sources said that Ross' renewal of the Washington administration's commitment to achieving progress in the peace process is "positive, encouraging, reinforces the credibility of the U.S. role, and reflects Washington's wish to shoulder its moral and political responsibilities and to fulfill the promises and pledges it has made in the past to establish a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East."

The Syrian sources, which reflect an official view, added that "logic says that compelling Israel to adhere to the foundations of the peace process is the only way to guarantee the achievement of the desired progress and to help to secure factors ensuring success for the peace process and to avert failure."

The sources pointed out that Syria will respond to Washington's new obligations to establish a "lasting" peace. If this peace does not come, the situation will be like a temporary truce that could collapse at any moment and with the first shock.

The sources stressed that Syria's eagerness to respond to the U.S. Administration's commitment to making the peace process in the region a success "stems from eagerness to recover the Arab land and rights in full.... Just as Syria is committed to these principles, it is also committed to the peace process as a historic opportunity that is supposed to eventually lead to the establishment of a real and strong peace based on the principles of right and justice." The sources pointed out that anyone who wants to advance the peace process "is urged to persuade the rulers of Tel Aviv...to recognize the principle of complete withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories." [passage omitted]

Paper Says 'No Peace' Without Syria

JN2603091894 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 25 Mar 94

[From the press review]

[Text] AL-THAWRAH writes about the vitality, importance, and positiveness of the Syrian stand vis-a-vis the peace process, about Israel's repressive practices, and about the need to deter Israel through firm international and American pressure to restore the credibility of international legitimacy.

Under the headline "The Vitality of the Syrian Stand," AL-THAWRAH notes that Dennis Ross, the U.S. coordinator for the peace process, has reiterated that the United States appreciates Syria's vital and important role in the peace process. The paper says: This new U.S. reiteration of the importance of the Syrian role confirms the fact that there will be no peace in the region without Syria and that Israel, through its intransigent policy, maneuvers, and aggressive course, constitutes the only obstacle to peace and the peace process.

AL-THAWRAH notes that there will be no peace without Syria. The paper says: No further proof is necessary now that the world has felt the importance of the Syrian role in launching the peace process and rectifying its march and now that events have proven that it is impossible to bypass this role or ignore its importance with regard to continuing the peace process and achieving its objective; namely, a just and comprehensive peace.

AL-THAWRAH says that the peace process, which began approximately two and a half years ago in Madrid and which continued over this long period of time, would not have begun or continued had it not been for Syria's agreement on the U.S. initiative and had it not been for its positive stand on all efforts aimed at activating the peace process and providing opportunities to achieve the required progress.

AL-THAWRAH adds: When the importance of the peace process and the kind of peace to be achieved through this process were addressed, Syria was the first to underscore this importance, to abide by the peace process, and to adhere to the principles and points of reference of this process. Syria's only condition for the peace process and its objective is to see this process forms an effective framework and an appropriate means to achieve a real, lasting, just, and comprehensive peace based on the principles of international legitimacy, as defined by President Hafiz al-Asad in the Geneva summit—the peace of the brave that restores rights to their owners.

AL-THAWRAH also dwells on the policy and methods of deception and maneuvering that Israel has resorted to to prevent the peace process from achieving its objectives on the basis of the Madrid conference and the resolutions of international legitimacy.

Concluding, AL-THAWRAH says: Reactivating the peace process toward its objective requires, during the current stage, a clear international stand in which the U.S. Administration assumes a major role in exerting pressure on Israel to force it to abandon its policy of maneuvering, extortion, and aggression and to frankly accept the principles of the peace process, as defined by the Madrid formula, and to implement its basic principle, land for peace, without misinterpreting the content and the principle of this formula.

In another commentary, AL-THAWRAH writes about the Israeli massacre perpetrated against the Palestinian

people inside the holy Ibrahimi Mosque last month in which more than 400 were either martyred or wounded. The paper says that this massacre was only the beginning, and that it is another test balloon through which the Tel Aviv rulers aimed to measure the international community's reaction to and influence on the course of events. AL-THAWRAH also notes the new massacre in Hebron the day before yesterday, which coincided with the U.S. Administration's endeavor and the moves of U.S. coordinator Dennis Ross in the involved capitals to activate the peace process and to give momentum to its obstructed process. The new massacre also came in the wake of Security Council Resolution 904. In addition, Israel escalated its military attacks against the cities and villages in southern Lebanon.

AL-THAWRAH notes that this does not hold out any hope that Israel will succumb to the will of peace, that it will respect its points of reference, that it will respect the resolutions of international legitimacy and its charters, that it will abandon racist terrorism, or that it will restore the Arab's usurped lands and rights.

The paper emphasized the need to exert international pressure and to abandon quiet diplomacy in order to make the rulers of Israel follow the right path and accept the requirements of a just and comprehensive peace. The paper notes that Israel's terrorist practices constitute a serious threat that needs a firm and swift response from the international community and the U.S. sponsor—whose role, initiative, and interests are being targeted—to champion the international credibility and resolutions that are still being violated openly so that Israel will not remain above the laws of the international community and above questioning and punishment.

Concluding, AL-THAWRAH calls for the resolutions of international legitimacy to be implemented, for protection for the citizens in the occupied territories to be secured, and for a firm stand to be taken to curb Israeli aggression to force it to withdraw from all occupied Arab territory.

Commentary on 'Israel's Destructive Role' in Lebanon

JN2503151694 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Station commentary]

[Text] Judiciary investigations in Lebanon have revealed the involvement of some Mosad-linked groups in the blowing up of the Sayyidat al-Najat Church, as well as their attempts to plant other explosives at schools and public places in order to create confusion, undermine national accord, and destroy understanding, stability, and salvation in Lebanon. Detained suspects have confessed that they were instructed by Israeli Mosad officers. The conspiracy is large and serious. It has claimed many lives, and might have claimed the lives of many schoolboys. It targets the Lebanese entity, the Lebanese accord, and Lebanese independence. The Government of Lebanon dissolved the Lebanese Forces Party after it convicted several of its prominent members of involvement in the Mosad's plan.

Blowing up the Sayyidat al-Najat Church, which brought death and injury to many people, followed the Israeli massacre at the holy Ibrahimi Mosque. Israel believed it could hit two birds with one stone: Covering up the brutal Hebron massacre and destroying the large strides Lebanon has taken on the road to national accord. In the person of the Mosad, Israel planted several time bombs at schools and public places—bombs that would have killed many people, if not for the efforts of the Lebanese forces that defused them. The Israelis planned for the bombing conspiracy to increase internal tension to an explosive point, allowing the Mosad to exploit the sectarian issue.

As a result, the Lebanese soon found themselves on the brink of a new civil war, the national accord was dissolving, and the sound of treacherous gunfire was again heard. Israel wants to avenge Lebanon and the Lebanese because they have stopped their infighting, restored the Lebanese motherland and its genuine traditions of love and coexistence, and got down to work to build their country and restore its vital role in the Arab and international communities, in full coordination with Syria.

In fact, Israel's daily brutal aggressions against southern Lebanese villages and cities cannot be isolated from the bombing plan. It is all the same conspiracy, designed to return Lebanon to the furnace of civil war, destruction, and agony by creating a situation in which brothers kill brothers, children die under the rubble of burning houses, women lose their sons, the homeland is wiped out, and sectarian sedition rises up amid the roar of guns.

All this raises a series of persisting questions about Israel's destructive role in Lebanon and the region. How can Israel's peace allegations correspond with blowing up the Sayyidat al-Najat Church in Juniyah, with planting bombs in Lebanon, and with raining shells on the southern Lebanese people? While the Israeli Government claims it had no information about plans to carry out the holy Ibrahimi Mosque massacre, it cannot disavow Mosad's plans to blow up churches and schools in Lebanon. The Israeli Army also committed a new massacre after the holy Ibrahimi Mosque massacre. Yesterday, it used tank rockets to destroy homes in Hebron, causing scores of casualties among Palestinian civilians.

Israel's treacherous shells cause scores of casualties among the Palestinians and the Lebanese every day. Israel does not care if the victims are women or children. What is important is to ruin the Lebanese situation and destroy the Palestinian intifadah. The results, however, run counter to Israel's expectations. The Lebanese have enhanced their cohesion and exposed Israel's games. Lebanon's healthy situation and its accord will block every conspiracy. The Palestinians have also become more determined to continue their struggle and offer

sacrifices. They are no longer frightened by Israel's tanks or guns. Israel's destructive role in the region and the peace process and its attempt to plunge the Middle East into the furnace of sectarian conflicts are also exposed to the world. Israel wants to expand and expand. There is no way for that to happen other than via a trouble-plagued Middle East.

The results of the judiciary investigations in Lebanon should open the eyes of many in the West, especially those who have sympathy for Zionism, to Israel's destructive role. This should prompt influential sides to curb its aggressive plans, which are aimed at returning to the law of the jungle and destroying peace prospects in the Middle East.

Press on Arab Boycott of Israel, Israeli Policy

JN2703125694 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Press review]

[Text] The newspaper TISHRIN comments on the efforts made by some international quarters and some Arabs to effect a revocation of the economic boycott of Israel, affirming that Israel has not taken a single step in the direction of peace, and that it has not made any worth-noting effort to render the peace process a success. On the contrary, the paper adds, Israel has done its best to demolish the peace process. Moreover, it has failed to express any willingness to withdraw its troops from the occupied Arab territories. Worse still, it has not changed, even by a hairbreadth, its hostile settlement course. It has not halted, even for a single moment, the policy of repression, terrorism, displacement, and killing.

Given all this, the paper wonders: What has changed to warrant an Arab revocation of the economic boycott of Israel, and the opening of Arab markets for Israeli products? Has Israel withdrawn from a single inch of occupied territory, or even pledged to do so? Has it halted its settlement policy? Has it revoked the policy of killing, displacement, and dislocation targeting Arabs?

TISHRIN states that the Arab boycott of Israel was a response to the hostile and criminal Israeli policies, which are in violation of the most basic rules of international law, the Geneva conventions, and the UN Charter. Israel has not made any change in its policies. Consequently, there is nothing to warrant an Arab revocation of the boycott. Worse still, the Israeli aggressiveness and anti-peace course has been nurtured. For, in spite of Arab efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, Israel has committed massacres. The Ibrahimi Mosque massacre is flagrant proof of Israel's aggressiveness.

Concluding its commentary, TISHRIN wonders: Would it be out of place if we ask those urging a revocation of the Arab boycott to put pressure on Israel to make it respect international law and human rights, and respond to the wishes for peace, particularly since the Washington talks have entered their third year, with nothing in the horizon indicating that the intransigent anti-peace Israeli position has changed?

Under the headline "Rabin's Threats Are Meant to Circumvent Peace," the newspaper AL-BA'TH says: The bilateral talks are expected to be resumed in Washington in April after Syria, through inter-Arab coordination, has given the peace process a new lease of life by bringing it back on track.

The paper adds: Although no date has thus far been set for the start of the next round of talks, the Rabin government has begun to step up its threats, and to couple these threats with aggressive acts against our kinfolk in occupied Palestine and southern Lebanon.

The paper goes on to say: Rabin attempts to shuffle cards whenever he finds himself cornered, and whenever international efforts to advance the peace process reach an advanced stage. The developments we have seen over the past few months, particularly in the aftermath of the Geneva summit, have shown that Rabin's efforts to circumvent the summit outcome culminated in the Hebron massacre, as well as a spate of attacks on southern Lebanon. These developments have also proved that Rabin has remained hostage to a maneuvering mind-set opposed to peace, and that he has continued to cling to a host of impossible conditions that cannot but obstruct the peace process and kill the new opportunities created for it.

Concluding its commentary, AL-BA'TH affirms the need to halt Israel's efforts to evade the requirements of peace, particularly since the attainment of just and comprehensive peace has become a regional and international demand that will reflect positively on the interests of the entire world community.

For its part, the newspaper AL-THAWRAH comments on the tragic situation being experienced by the city of Hebron 29 days after the perpetration of the holy Ibrahimi Mosque massacre.

The paper says: What is currently taking place in Hebron and the remaining parts of the occupied Arab territories must open the eyes of the world community to Israeli practices. This must also draw attention to the tragic situation experienced by the Palestinians under the hateful occupation, which has turned the lives of hundreds of thousands of people into an intolerable inferno, and deprived them of the most basic requirements of a free and decent life.

AL-THAWRAH goes on to say: Israeli practices, which grow harsher and more ferocious day in and day out, and which have begun to take on an exceptionally bloody and heinous dimension, clearly show the Israeli rulers' determination to persist with their arrogance, stubbornness, and aggressive policy, which is diametrically opposed to the efforts to achieve just and comprehensive peace.

The paper notes that these practices underscore the urgent need for extensive and effective international moves to create the proper mechanism for the implementation of the recent UN Security Council Resolution Number 904 to ensure Israeli compliance with the relevant international resolutions, and provide the Palestinians with real protection from the repression of occupation troops.

The paper concludes by saying: Israel will be mistaken if it believes that it will manage to achieve its objectives through the pursuit of these policies. Israel must realize that the peace process will remain deadlocked unless it changes its conduct and concepts, particularly with regard to comprehensive solution and the recognition of the Palestinians' just and legitimate rights. No tangible accomplishment will be made unless Israel effects these changes. For, despite their strong eagerness to achieve peace, the Arabs will not bargain over their territories and rights. Nor will they accept anything short of complete withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories. This is the only way to achieve a just and comprehensive peace.

Al-Asad Receives DPRK Official

JN2703170794 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1615 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] At 1630 today, President Hafiz al-Asad received Choe Ki-chong, chairman of the DPRK Education Committee, and his accompanying delegation. The meeting was attended by Education Minister Muhammad Ghassan al-Halabi and the DPRK ambassador in Damascus.

Choe Ki-chong conveyed to the president a message from DPRK President Kim Il-song.

Iran

Deputy Foreign Minister Assesses Iraqi Ties

JN2503153994 London AL-WASAT in Arabic 21-27 Mar 94 pp 21-23

[Interview with Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif by Zaki Shihab in Tehran; date not given]

[Text] [Shihab] How do you assess the state of Iranian-Iraqi relations in light of recent bilateral contacts?

[Zarif] It is a matter of policy for us in Iran to cultivate good relations with all our neighbors, particularly those with which we share borders. This holds for Iraq and the other Arab states, as well as the republics of the former Soviet Union and Turkey.

Our intention is to sort out all our problems with Iraq. To that end, we initiated confidence-building measures, particularly after the end of the war Iraq triggered. Recent moves to improve our ties with Iraq began in Karachi, where our foreign ministers met. There was another session in New York. The two sides agreed to follow up with exchange visits on various occasions with a view to ironing out outstanding issues.

My visit to Baghdad was to lay the groundwork for this and to ensure the success of any future talks between the Iraqi and Iranian foreign ministers. After my visit to Baghdad, a top Iraqi Foreign Ministry official came here.

[Shihab] What did you talk about at these sessions?

[Zarif] The prisoners of war, disputed border demarcation, and coordination on reactivating the Shatt al-'Arab, plus other technical matters. The Iraqis raised the question of their aircraft that landed on our territory in the wake of the invasion of Kuwait. For our part, we brought up the issue of the Iranian planes that landed in Iraq, that were either hijacked or whose pilots defected.

[Shihab] How many Iranian are held by Iraq?

[Zarif] Twenty, the last plane was commandeered to Baghdad about two months ago. It is still being held there in contravention of international aviation rules that require Iraq to return it and hand over the hijackers. As for the Iraqi planes that landed on our territory against our will, we think that as long as the international embargo remains in place, we should keep them, as stipulated by UN Security Council and UN resolutions.

[Shihab] Is your call for a restoration of ties with Iraq tactical, or is it based on strategic considerations?

[Zarif] We view our relations with Iraq from a strategic perspective, based on a desire on our part to nurture good and cooperative relations with all our neighbors. It is in this frame of mind that we have sought to bury the hatchet. In other words, we have been trying to rise above the wounds of the war that exhausted our manpower and economic resources. We have worked and are still working on starting with a clean slate. We are reaching out to our neighbors in the south of the Gulf in the interest of regional stability and to forestall attempts by external powers to destabilize the region in order to justify their continued presence. Let me repeat that we are now approaching Iraq from a strategic perspective. Naturally, pressing issues still need to be addressed. For instance, the prisoners of war [POW's]. We still think Iraq holds a large number.

[Shihab] Can you be specific about the number?

[Zarif] The trouble is that the Iraqi Government has been asserting for some time that it has none. This is at odds with our estimates. We have documents to show that there are 8,000 Iranian prisoners in Iraq. We have provided the International Committe of the Red Cross [ICRC] with information about 3,700 prisoners. We also know there are Iranian prisoners in two Iraqi camps to which the ICRC has been denied access. According to our records, there are 39,000 Iranian prisoners in Iraq, of whom only 18,000 are registered with the ICRC. The ICRC knows nothing about the rest. Some of these have been in detention for more than five years. The question of prisoners of war is a humanitarian one and so needs urgent attention. We have been asking our Iraqi brothers to do something positive about this issue so the POW's dossier can be closed.

[Shihab] What was Iraq's reply?

[Zarif] The Iraqis said they had been pressed to raise the issue of the Iraqi POW's in Iran and that they had no interest in keeping any Iranian POW. They said: We want to clarify the matter and clear the air. There are many other issues on which we should cooperate so we can succeed in building and enhancing confidence between the two sides, on both the official and popular levels.

[Shihab] Do you have the impression that Iraq's replies are true and sincere?

[Zarif] It is difficult to comment on that. However, I hope the Iraqis are sincere. We in Iran and Iraq will remain neighbors forever, whether we like it or not. This is one of life's realities.

[Shihab] Have you sensed any Iraqi effort to resolve the problem of the POW's?

[Zarif] We have not yet received any signs of such readiness. We made proposals at the negotiating table. They also explained their views on several issues.

[Shihab] Did they deny the presence of Iranian POW's in Iraq?

[Zarif] Yes, they did.

[Shihab] Do you have any evidence supporting your claims of the presence of such POW's?

[Zarif] We have no evidence, but we strongly feel a large number of Iranian POW's are still detained in camps. We are making every effort to apply UN resolutions regarding relations between the two countries. Iran has previously complied with these laws, and it will continue to do so in the future.

[Shihab] Regarding the aircraft issue, the Iraqi Government is talking about 100 aircraft, while you are talking only about 20 or 30 Iraqi aircraft in Iran.

[Zarif] The problem is that the Iraqis believe all the aircraft that left Iraq headed for Iranian territory. This is wrong. Some Iraqi aircraft that took off crashed and some others returned to Iraq. Iraq believes every aircraft seen on radar heading for our territory and our airspace is in Iran. This is untrue. We are honest in seeking a solution to this problem. Iran has about 20 aircraft in Iraq. Some of them were, as I said, hijacked. Regrettably, the hijackers were not tried or extradited and the aircraft were not returned.

[Shihab] How many Iraqi aircraft crashed in Iranian territory?

[Zarif] I don't have a specific figure in mind. Here, I would like to add that some of the aircraft that landed in our airports were Kuwaiti aircraft Iraq seized after its invasion of Kuwait. We carried out maintenance work and returned them to their original owners.

[Shihab] How many?

[Zarif] About six, and we still expect the Kuwaiti Government to pay the costs of their maintenance in Iran.

[Shihab] How may Iraqi aircraft are at your airports?

[Zarif] We had announced the arrival of 22 aircraft, including the six Kuwaiti aircraft that were returned.

[Shihab] What are your conditions for returning the Iraqi aircraft?

[Zarif] The international embargo imposed on Iraq does not allow their return. When the embargo is lifted, we will discuss and resolve the issue within the general framework of the Iraqi-Iranian relationship. Our aircraft are still held in Iraq, and we have to resolve that problem.

[Shihab] To what extent do you agree with the Iraqi Government confrontation of the establishment of a Kurdish state, especially since you have previously said you reject the establishment of a new Israel on your border?

[Zarif] We clarified our position on the need to maintain Iraq's territorial integrity from the beginning, after we felt that some had ambitions in the region. This was not a unilateral Iranian position. Syria and Turkey shared with us the idea during the periodic meetings we held. We agree with many Arab and foreign countries that Iraq should remain unified. We reject the partition of Iraq. Any attempt to partition it will create problems and dangers that will threaten a number of the region's countries. From the very beginning, we opposed Iraq's invasion of the State of Kuwait. We will take a similar position in the future. On the international level, we also had a similar position on Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. We also urged some Gulf Cooperation Council member states to solve their border disputes through understanding, because we believe dialogue is the best means for understanding.

[Shihab] You are talking about an understanding with Turkey about the issue of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq. But Turkey has often charged that Iran is extending military aid to banned Kurdish groups in Turkey.

[Zarif] I have seen such reports, but Turkey and Iran have a complete understanding about the situation in Iraq and the violability of its territorial integrity. We have also reached an understanding on combating terrorism from whatever source it comes. We look forward to the day when Iraq complies with all UN resolutions and reasserts its authority on all its territory. Syria also shares this hope.

[Shihab] Are you worried by the cooperation between the Kurds and certain Western nations?

[Zarif] Human rights in Iraqi Kurdistan is not a new issue. What is new, however, is the newfound Western and American interest in the matter. Then, you have the Israeli presence in northern Iraq on which we must keep a watchful eye.

[Shihab] What evidence do you have of Israeli-Kurdish cooperation close to the border with Iran?

[Zarif] We have heard much about this presence and this cooperation.

[Shihab] Have you received reports about the matter?

[Zarif] We have received reports. We are following them closely. There are indications that there have been visits and contacts that have nothing to do with humanitarian and social work. They are purely political and suggest ill intentions.

[Shihab] One of the issues that will come up during the forthcoming visit to Baghdad by 'Ali Akbar Velayati is the future of Iranian and Iraqi opposition groups—Mojahedin-e Khalq and the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq [SAIRI]. Have you reached an understanding with Iraq on the activities of the two organizations?

[Zarif] From the start of the war imposed upon us by Iraq, mercenaries have been working on behalf of the Iraqi Government. They have mounted numerous terrorist attacks for the enemy. We are not worried about the presence of such hypocrites on Iraqi territory. However, if Iraq really does want to turn a new leaf in its relations with Iran, we will certainly pursue our security and our people's safety. Thus, if any terrorist groups

mount an offensive action on our territory, we will have to pursue them across the border into Iraq where they maintain bases. Cooperation between the two countries is hardly advanced by giving refuge to such people. They have to be barred from pursuing any activities that will damage relations between Iraq and Iran.

[Shihab] How did the Iraqis react to your proposals regarding Mojahedin-e Khalq and SAIRI, led by Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim?

[Zarif] The human rights issue in Iraq must be addressed. We think the reasons that prompted hundreds of thousands of Iraqis to cross into Iranian territory must also be addressed. We are playing host to them on humanitarian grounds. There is no comparison between the presence of SAIRI in Iran and that of Mojahedin-e Khalq in Iraq.

[Shihab] Are we likely to see Iranian pilgrims visiting al-Najaf and Karbala' anytime soon?

[Zarif] This is one of the issues that we discussed with the Iraqis. We want to see movement of people in both directions for visits to holy sites. We are striving to work out an arrangement.

[Shihab] When do you expect a solution on that front?

[Zarif] We have been cooperative. The ball is now in the Iraqi court.

[Shihab] When will Dr. Velayati visit Baghdad?

[Zarif] Within the next two months. There are a number of outstanding issues we hope will be straightened out through diplomatic channels before a date is set for the visit.

President Opens First Cabinet Session of New Year

LD2703172194 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] The first cabinet meeting of the new [Iranian] year was held this afternoon under the chairmanship of President Hashemi-Rafsanjani. At the start of the meeting, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani conveyed his new year greetings to all his colleagues and government officials, and he described the new year as a time for completing the first [five-year] plan and as a time for hard work and the development of the country.

The president continued by referring to the new year message issued by the eminent leader [Khamene'i] and he stressed that the four principles of production, thrift, a working conscience, and working discipline must be diligently pursued as the fundamental requirements for the improvement of society and the advancement of the country.

The meeting continued with an examination of the executive regulations of the import/export law, and 29 of its articles were approved.

It was also announced in today's cabinet session that, in view of the time when the new moon marking the start of the month of Shavval was sighted, Wednesday, 17 Farvardin [6 April], coinciding with the 25th of Shavval, will be a public holiday in commemoration of the anniversary of the martyrdom of his holiness Imam Ja'far Sadiq, peace be upon him.

Velayati Comments on ECO's Goals

LD2503151194 Tehran IRIB Television Second Program Network in Persian 1327 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Interview with Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati by unidentified correspondent in special program on the Economic Cooperation Organization, date, place not given—recorded]

[Text] [Correspondent] The activities of the Economic Cooperation Organization [ECO] have been organized such that it seems the creation of a free trade zone—where all the parties are to have an interest—is the main objective of the ECO. To clarify that issue we asked [Foreign Minister] Dr. Velayati whether the ECO is aiming at a free trade zone or is pursuing other goals as well.

[Velayati] The ECO pursues numerous objectives, one of which is the establishment of free trade zones so that all member states have the possibility of participating in them. Two documents were confirmed by the leaders at the end of their meeting and were published. One of the documents concerns the ECO's long term perspective, based on the ECO's executive plan which was adopted during a session by the foreign ministers of ECO member states at Quetta in Pakistan. That became the basis for the ECO's long term plan.

What is intended in the ECO is mostly long term infrastructural cooperation; or infrastructural cooperation which can have most positive and constructive effects in the region for long-term ECO action.

Oil Minister on Achievements, Future Plans

NC2603160694 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0245 GMT 26 Mar 94

[Interview with Gholamreza Aqazadeh, Petroleum minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, by unidentified Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran correspondent in Tehran, date not given; from the "Work, Life" feature—recorded]

[Text] [Correspondent] Mr. Aqazadeh, good morning and greetings for the new year. God willing, may it be a year full of success. Could you tell our listening friends what important projects were implemented by the Petroleum Ministry in 1372 [year beginning 21 March 1993]?

[Aqazadeh] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful.

I reciprocate new year's greetings to all our dear people and I hope that it will be a wonderful and constructive year for our country and people, God willing. Regarding the last (?two) years, we attained considerable success in 1372, which can be presented in the form of a list:

—The exploration of the Darkhovin reserves, which has approximately 9 billion barrels of very superior quality light oil.

—The discovery of a new gas reserve with 20 trillion cubic feet [as heard] of gas with very rich deposits.

—Regarding drilling, fortunately we have attained a wonderful drilling record since the Revolution: 300,000 meters on the nationally.

—In the field of crude oil production, we have raised Iran's production capacity to over 4 million barrels. The war caused extensive damage to the crude oil production industry. Fortunately, we were able to carry out repairs and reconstruction and raise our production from 2.5 million barrels at that time to 4 million.

—Regarding infrastructural projects, one of our most remarkable achievements was the inauguration—in the presence of the esteemed president—of the Arak Refinery with a capacity of 150,000 barrels and of one of the greatest petrochemical units of the country, namely the Arak petrochemical complex with a capacity of approximately 250,000 petrochemicals, including light and heavy polyethylene, and propylene.

—In the field of gas piping, in 1372 we were able to install 250,000 gauges in the houses of the people, and by activating a new phase of the Kangan Refinery we were able to raise its output to more than 55 million cubic meters.

—Fortunately, we were successful in expanding our gas piping activities in various cities, and in 1372 200 cities had been covered by piped gas or activities for expanding the gas piping network had been initiated, which was a massive and valuable project performed by the National Gas company.

—With all the deficiencies and shortcomings, it was an appropriate performance compared to other years for the National Distribution Company [NDC]. Fortunately, we did not experience any fuel shortages in the colder areas of the country, such as in East and West Azerbaijan, Ardabil, Kermanshah, and Kordestan Provinces. The situation was most satisfactory throughout the country, compared to all the years since the Revolution. This made it possible to have a very rare situation countrywide, and except for some temporary shortages in some cities, the situation was most satisfactory.

Fortunately, with the signatures of most of the deputies and their appreciation of its services, the NDC was able to plan its activities for 1373 [year beginning 21 March 1994] in such a manner that we can resolve the problem of transporting fuel permanently, God willing.

These activities are a brief account of our projects in 1372. Regarding the sale of crude oil and our presence in international markets, the situation in the first six months of this year regarding prices and sales were favorable and in accordance with what had been envisaged in the budget. However, in the second half of the year, with a slump in oil prices, our income decreased. In general, we had an oil income of $13.5 billion, which was $3 billion less than the forecasts. In view of the situation in the international market, this level of income was quite appropriate and we were able to adhere to the production ceilings stipulated by OPEC, as well as to organize our exports within that framework in an excellent manner without any retail problems.

[Correspondent] Mr. Aqazadeh, could you tell us what programs you envision for 1373? If, God willing, you have any glad tidings for our compatriots, do let us know.

[Aqazadeh] I may state that since the development and distribution of oil and gas, the expansion of the petrochemical complexes is the priority of the Islamic Republic of Iran. We are optimistic that new oil derricks that have been set up for exploration in the Caspian Sea will become operational next year. In addition, we will begin drilling wells in the eastern Mazandaran Sea region, which is one of the most suitable sites in the country, even though it has not been explored in the past years.

Our prospecting activities will continue in the Persian Gulf and [words indistinct] fortunately, we have decided that the planning and construction of this refinery will be done completely by Iranians. This work will begin in 1373 and it is hoped it will be operational in 1375 [year beginning 21 March 1996].

A very important piece of news for our people is the value-added [arzesh-afzudeh] importance of this unit, as well as the magnitude of the production of the vast Bandar-e Imam complex. The glad tidings I have for the people are that this massive complex, which is the largest petrochemical production unit in our country and covers all branches, such as light and heavy polyethylene, propylene, EDC, PVC [preceding acronyms in English], as well as all other petrochemical products, is expected to begin full operation in Khordad [22 May-21 June] this year.

With these complexes going into operation, we will not only be able to attain self-sufficiency in most petrochemical departments but will also be able to export $300 million worth of these products this year. This is also good news for the factories that provide the raw materials for the petrochemical complexes, and they should not have any doubts regarding the sale of their products because we will ensure high-quality production at an international standard and will thus permanently eliminate the problems that they have experienced for so

many years regarding petrochemical imports and fluctuations in foreign exchange income.

On the gas piping situation, as in the past years, we will expand these activities in various cities of the country, which is our priority. We hope that this year more cities in the colder areas of our country will join the gas piping network.

With the functioning of the Sarkhun Refinery in Bandar-e 'Abbas, which has a capacity of approximately 15 million cubic meters of gas per day, we will be able to cater to the needs of the Hormozgan, especially of the Kerman Province, its power station, the peripheral copper industries, the Sarcheshmeh copper complex, and the cities on this route right up to Kerman. This will open a new chapter in the piping of gas. With the development of the refinery and its operation, especially of the (Karkehraker) unit in Abadan that distills furnace oil and its products such as gasoline, gas oil, and kerosene, we are extremely optimistic that 1373 will be a wonderful year for our people regarding the provision of their fuel product requirements.

I predict that in the oil industry 1373 will be a grand year for production, foreign exchange earnings, and the increase in the efficiency of this great industry of the country. Once again, I wish to convey my greetings for this new year to the people, especially to my colleagues in the petroleum industry who have behind them a successful year, and I hope that this year they will make the same sublime efforts so that the country is steered toward economic and political self-sufficiency.

[Correspondent] Mr. Aqazadeh, I am extremely grateful that you have given some of your time for us, despite your engagements. We hope you will be successful and that in the course of the year 1373 we will be able to be at your service again.

[Aqazadeh] Likewise, I am grateful for your efforts and those of your colleagues at the radio [station] for preparing and presenting such joyful, wonderful, and useful programs.

[Correspondent] May you be successful, God willing.

OPEC Decisions on Oil Production Discussed

Approve Current Ceiling

NC2703074594 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0345 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Commentary by News Research and Commentary Group]

[Text] After three days of talks, the OPEC petroleum ministers could not reach a consensus on the reduction of production ceilings for member countries and approved the current ceiling of 4.5 million barrels per day [as heard] to remain in effect till the end of the current year.

Aqazadeh, our petroleum minister, expressed his displeasure at the final outcome of the three-day OPEC ministers' session and said that the responsibility for this decision rests solely on those who are not supporters of OPEC and the oil-exporting countries.

The Saudi petroleum minister on the other hand, expressed his satisfaction at the OPEC decision to maintain the current production ceilings; however, he refrained from commenting on the effects of this decision and the possibility of a further slump in oil prices.

It was expected that in its latest session OPEC would reach a consensus. In the past few months, the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] member countries had been in the forefront in proposing the reduction of oil production of OPEC and non-OPEC countries. These countries are also sustaining losses and had been adversely affected as a result of the oil prices on the international market.

The budgets for the current year of most of the GCC member countries have faced considerable deficits. The Omani oil minister had initiated extensive activity within the framework of the GCC recommendations for reducing production. He had contacted most of the non-OPEC oil-producing countries and had enlisted their concurrence for reduction of their oil levels. Therefore, it was anticipated that the pioneers of this proposal for reduced production would take the initiative in this regard. However, Saudi Arabia's opposition to reduction of its quota resulted in the failure of the session.

The Saudi petroleum minister expressed doubts on the effectiveness of reducing of OPEC production ceilings and the adherence of the non-OPEC countries to their commitments based on reducing their production and questioned the basic plan for reducing OPEC production. In general, Saudi Arabia's efforts were geared to retaining its quota of 8 million barrels.

The Saudi quota prior to the oil war was about 5 million barrels. The exclusion of the oil production of Iraq and Kuwait at that time paved the way for the increase in Saudi Arabia's production quota. However, after the return of Kuwait to the oil market and despite the possibility of the reentry of Iraq in the oil market, Saudi Arabia continues to insist on its quota and has now had it endorsed, in practice.

This tendency on the part of Saudi Arabia to preserve the high level of its production quota has prevented the OPEC ministerial session from reaching any consensus on production ceilings and it was forced to agree to maintaining the current production ceiling. Iran had proposed that with the advent of spring, which results in diminished demand, the ceiling should be reduced by 1.2 million barrels so that the price would be adjusted and strengthened accordingly.

Aqazadeh Shows 'Displeasure'

NC2703063694 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0330 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Text] OPEC is to maintain its current production ceilings until the end of the year. The petroleum ministers of OPEC member countries were not able to reduce their production ceilings at the Geneva session due to opposition by Saudi Arabia.

Subroto, the OPEC secretary general, announced at the conclusion of the OPEC ministerial session that OPEC will retain the ceilings agreed upon for the first quarter of the current year until the year's end.

Most of the OPEC member countries and some non-OPEC oil-producing countries had expressed their willingness to reduce oil production in order to boost prices.

At the conclusion of the OPEC session, our Petroleum Minister Aqazadeh announced his displeasure at the latest OPEC decision and explained that the responsibility for the consequences of this decision will be solely on those who have prevented OPEC from reaching a consensus on reducing production and stabilizing the market.

Commentary Blames Saudi Arabia

LD2703184694 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1656 GMT 27 Mar 94

[Station commentary]

[Text] The OPEC oil ministers' session last night, after two days of intense discussions, approved the organization's production ceiling for the next nine months.

According to this agreement the daily production level of the 12 member countries is 24.52 million barrels, which is really the same as the present ceiling production level.

Thus oil experts believe the approved OPEC ceiling not only fails to support the present low oil prices, it will aggravate the process of their reduction.

It should be noted that the OPEC secretariat had earlier warned that the failure of the member countries to reduce daily oil production by about one million barrels would lead to further price cuts.

But despite the interest of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the majority of the members, obstructionism by the largest OPEC producer forced the session to an unrealistic agreement which was in turn accompanied by greater dissatisfaction of the OPEC members.

Oil market fluctuation in the past six months—which led to oil price reductions and a subsequent upset in the oil income of the oil exporting countries—forced the OPEC members to seek a solution, through diplomacy and discussions with other non-OPEC producers, to control production and strengthen oil prices.

And eight non-OPEC oil exporting countries said they were prepared to reduce a maximum of 250,000 barrels from their daily production.

Considering the surplus oil supply and in particular with the coming of spring and summer when demand generally decreases due to warmer weather, the Islamic Republic of Iran proposed that the present production ceiling should be reduced by six percent.

This would have strengthened the oil market and experts believe oil prices would have increased by four dollars.

The OPEC general secretary and some other member countries also thought reduction of production ceiling was a necessary realistic measure and the only means of improving prices in the present conditions.

However due to the opposition of Saudi Arabia, the opportunity for success was lost and in the view of the Islamic Republic of Iran and other OPEC members, the responsibility for the process of oil price reduction lies with those who did not wish for a reasonable OPEC understanding and agreement.

But our country, despite its dissatisfaction with the continuation of the previous production ceiling for the next nine months, will continue to respect OPEC regulations and will adhere to the new agreement and calls on all other member countries for commitment to the approved quotas and the need for strong political will towards the improvement of the oil market.

Emami-Kashani Delivers Friday Sermon

LD2503145194 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1106 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Second Friday sermon by Ayatollah Mohammad Emami-Kashani, spokesman of the Guardian Council, in Tehran on 25 March—recorded]

[Excerpts] [Passage omitted] In this sermon, God willing, I will be discussing last year's events, as well as what we witnessed and observed across the globe, and finally what experiences were gained by the Islamic world during the course of the year 1372 [ending 20 March 1994]. I will also be discussing the policies and decisions that must be made in social and political realms in the current year, 1373.

Last year, we observed the architects of the new world order. We saw how they put forward a new order for the world. However, we also saw that the so-called new order was in fact a new tyranny. There are times that the tyrant indulges in injustice and oppression, but the victims do not realize what is being done to them. This is because the tyrants justify their oppression. This new order proved to be a new mode of tyranny, injustice, and crime. They imposed such tyranny, and committed crimes at will in different parts of the world. However, they invariably gave different names to their deeds.

We only need to look at a number of Muslim countries, such as, for instance, Bosnia-Herzegovina. We saw what justifications they constantly provided for merely observing the continued genocide of Muslims by the Serbs. The sad thing, however, is that nations are in a deep slumber. World radio and television stations control the ebb and flow of the public opinion. This is an ugly and very dangerous phenomena. For instance, when they chose to condemn someone, they do it in a way that people readily accept their words. [passage omitted]

When one looks at the situation in the world, and when one sees nations in their deep slumber, one realizes that these nations resemble children, trying to remain in their happy slumbers. [last phrase in Arabic from an Islamic tradition] Like children, until they reach their puberty, they can easily be fooled. They can be given a dummy or a bottle and yet believe that it is the mother's milk which they are being given. [passage omitted]

One only needs to look at Palestine. What can one understand from viewing as a whole the issue of Gaza and Jericho on the one hand, and all the crimes committed by the Zionists in an ever-increasing manner, on the other hand? What should the world understand from all this? The world is able to understand, but refuses to do so. This is because people listen only to a particular brand of propaganda. They fail to understand that Zionism is an entity which, as the revolutionary nation of Palestine have found out, can only be confronted by resorting to fire and bullet. The Palestinians have grasped this issue very correctly. [Crowd chants in support of the Islamic revolution and its leaders, and in condemnation of U.S., Israel and counterrevolutionary elements].

Of course such is the nature of falsehood. But falsehood cannot always hide its nature. One day it will show its ugly nature and what it has done to people. They said: Come and sit at one table. They propagated this across the world. The Islamic Republic stood up and announced this as a trick. The revolutionary forces in Palestine too came together and said they would not accept this. At the time maybe many people and nations asked: Why don't you accept this and put an end to the conflicts? But now they look and see how vicious a wolf Zionism is. It is a vicious wolf. The crimes it has committed in the world. There is no time now. But I have read in books that even the distortions in the four Bibles, and I found the evidence, were made by Zionists. It was they who distorted the Bible. Whereever they penetrated and whatever political and economic affair they involved themselves, their criminal hands were greater than the rest. Such is the new world order and repression.

When some one attacked another, the latter would say: Oh, oppressor why are you attacking me? But now they attack and plunder the wealth of Muslim nations and exploit Muslim nations, but the latter do not say: Oh criminals why are you doing this to us? This is except for a group, a handful, including the Islamic Republic, and some others here and there. This is unfortunate and the only solution is the awakening of nations. And I have to tell the designer of such oppression led by American arrogance—although you might bot believe it but we do—that the Koran states that infidelity will be destroyed and oppression will be destroyed.

As the honorable prophet [Muhammad] graciously said: A government may survive if blasphemous, but not if tyrannical. [last sentence in Arabic] The tyranny of the West will collapse as did the tyranny of the East [the former Soviet Union]. We hope that [Western tyranny] is uprooted by the Lord of the Age [12th Shiite imam]. That does not mean that we should sit and wait for him to come. The wait means that we should also make a move. Exactly as we have, the way we have determined our path, guided by our eminent imam [Khomeyni]. The same path which is followed by the honorable leader of the revolution [Khamene'i], supported by our officials, the system, and the nation. That is the way it should be and that is the path.

Let not the unbelievers think that our respite to them is good for themselves. We grant them respite that they may grow in their iniquity. But they will have a shameful punishment. [Koranic verse, in Arabic].

Masterminds of the new world order, we pray to the Lord of the Age that your establishment is turned upside down, God willing, God willing. We hope: Leave them alone, to enjoy the good things of life and to please themselves. Let false hope amuse them. Soon will knowledge undeceive them. [Koranic verse, in Arabic].

Another issue I would like to talk about is this year's hajj. From this great base of Friday prayers I convey this wish of the Iranian nation to the Saudi Government. As the dear leader of the revolution said, the Saudi Government must not make trouble for the people's pilgrimage. Creating problems would be harmful to nations and beneficial to the enemies of Islam. You, yourselves, know that arrogance really wishes harm for Islam. But Islamic countries are all brothers and united. I hope that, God willing, the Saudi Government gives a positive response and, God willing, stops creating problems.

Another thing I would like to say is to pray for the souls of the passengers of the aircraft that crashed in Karabakh. We say to the Russian Government: You must correct this fault in your air traffic control system. That is a very regrettable situation. [passage omitted]